THE TREND OF THE CENTURIES

A. W. ARCHIBALD

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The Trend of the Centuries

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The Trend of the Centuries

OR

The Historical Unfolding of the Divine Purpose

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BY THE
REV. ANDREW W. ARCHIBALD, D. D.
Author of "The Bible Verified"

"Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range;
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change."

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."
—TENNYSON.

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In Commemoration

OF THE

FIFTIETH MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARY

SEPTEMBER NINTH, NINETEEN HUNDRED

OF

CHARLES AUSTIN WARREN

AND

EMELINE CURTIS

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

BY THEIR SON-IN-LAW

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

THIS volume, like THE BIBLE VERIFIED, from the same pen, has been an unconscious growth, rather than a predetermined product laboriously wrought out from beginning to end. In the midst of a busy pastorate, discourses were given time and again on striking events and epochs and personages. A selected number of these was found to constitute a consecutive line of thought, the chapters after the first (which is general and introductory) following one another in the order of logical and also of historical sequence, except that the consideration of the Reformation once entered upon is finished before attention is turned to Columbus, who ushers in the modern period.

After the chapter giving what is to be the ruling idea of the book, four chapters set forth the preparation for Christianity under the old dispensation, the divine purpose though suffering apparent defeat yet moving straight on. There come next three chapters on the actual inauguration and the triumphant establishment of the heavenly kingdom; after that

three more on its threatened overthrow from without through Islamism, and then five on the danger of defeat from within through the corruption of the Church, this peril being averted by the Protestant movement, while four chapters treat of the new era that dawned with the discovery of another continent, each illustrating the truth that "life shall on and upward go." Of course, a vast library would be needed to cover in detail the ground that is traversed, but for popular use this single volume perhaps will sufficiently indicate in broad outline the sweep of God's steadily maturing plan through the centuries.

The purpose of the work is to set forth Bunsen's great idea of "God in history." This is not exclusively a clergyman's conception, but it is likewise that of representative historians. Bancroft, for instance, in the introduction to his History of the United States, could say that his object was, "as the fortunes of a nation are not under the control of a blind destiny, to follow the steps by which a favoring Providence, calling our institutions into being, has conducted the country to its present happiness and glory." In his chapter on the Pilgrims he similarly recognizes the divine in this way: "The mysterious influence of that Power which enchains the destinies of

states, overruling the decisions of sovereigns and the forethought of statesmen, often deduces the greatest events from the least commanding causes." If the author has not failed of his aim, it is thus from the attitude of the broad generalization of the historian even, rather than from the moralizing or specially theological standpoint, that this work has been produced, with its emphasis upon the agency of "the power that makes for righteousness" in the unfolding of the years.

When it came to selecting a title that would comprehend all that has been written, there came to mind what Themistocles once said to Xerxes, "that a man's discourse was like to a rich Persian carpet, the beautiful figures and patterns of which can only be shown by spreading and extending it out; when it is contracted and folded up, they are obscure and lost." With a desire that such may be the happy effect of this opening up of the past, of the disclosure in the following pages of God's great and unique plan with its exquisite designs, and with confidence that inspiration for the twentieth century will be caught, when the trend of the centuries that precede is clearly discerned, when through all the previous ages a mastering, controlling Will, both beneficent and righteous, is recognized,

this volume is herewith entitled, "The Trend of the Centuries: or The Historical Unfolding of the Divine Purpose."

The writer's course of thought will not have been followed in vain, if the reader, at its close, is ready to say with Browning:

> "God 's in his heaven,
> All 's right with the world."

This volume will have accomplished its object if doubt is removed and if faith in an overruling Providence is strengthened, till there is Tennyson's recognition of

> "One far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

ANDREW W. ARCHIBALD.

PORTER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
Brockton, Mass. *December*, 1900.

Under other captions, the second and last chapters of this book have largely appeared in The Bibliotheca Sacra of Oberlin and The Treasury of New York, and are here reproduced with their permission.

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THE WHIRLING WHEELS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

"As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, the whirling wheels."—EZEKIEL 10 : 13.

I

THE WHIRLING WHEELS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

THE whirling wheels of Ezekiel have generally been regarded as emblematic of the circling events of providence. This anciently was not an uncommon thought. The Roman philosopher, Seneca, makes reference to "the wheel of fortune." Sophocles, the Greek poet, speaks of

> "Whirling upon the gods' swift wheel around,"

to indicate the vicissitudes of life. "The Egyptian wheels," says Plutarch, in his life of Numa, "signify to us the instability of human fortune, and that, in whatever way God changes and turns our lot and condition, we should rest contented, and accept it as right and fitting." We are to consider the whirling wheels of divine providence.

First, we will notice their majestic and resistless sweep. "Their rings," we are informed, "were high and dreadful." Their vast circumference swept the whole range of created things. They were also, it is said, of

"the color of beryl." They rolled by with the splendor of a flashing gem. How sublime and beautiful the working of God is! Take the natural world, and the same law governs the rolling spheres and the whirling dust. Atom and star acknowledge the same subtle forces of attraction and repulsion. The rim of the wheel compasses the farthest globe and the nearest molecule. Gravitation is universal. The wheels of God's providential government in this respect are indeed "high and dreadful." Were he to withhold his care for a moment, the orderly cosmos would break up into the original chaos.

And what beauty as well as grandeur in the revolutions of the wheels! We think of the "color of beryl," as we recall that scene of the succession of the seasons, so charmingly painted in Thomson's immortal poem, but we do not recognize God as we should, and as he did, in the "rolling year":

> "Man marks not Thee, marks not the mighty hand,
> That, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres."

Not only in nature, but in history, high and dreadful are the wheels of God's on-moving chariot. We are amazed at the way the car of religious progress has rolled on, with nations powerless to resist its onward course. It

has been a triumphal car all down the ages, and in its track the mightiest monarchies and dynasties have been as "the small dust."

Note some of the facts. The chosen people were a little band of slaves in ancient Egypt, but they gained, under God, their freedom. They spent seventy years of captivity in the Babylonian empire, but a faithful remnant returned and rebuilt Jerusalem. The Jews were destroyed as a nation, when the armies of Titus left not one stone upon another of the holy city, but, phœnix-like, out of the ashes of the disastrous conflagration sprang Christianity.

Then the gospel encountered pagan emperors of great power, who opposed it to the death, but it steadily made its way on, till it sat on the throne of the Cæsars in the conversion of Constantine. It was threatened with extinction by the hordes of barbarians that poured down from the north, causing the decline and fall of the great Roman empire, but not of the kingdom of the truth, which swept on to greater triumphs in the conversion of the very savages by whom it was assaulted, and it gave us our present European States with their Christian civilization. How majestically the cause has rolled on through the centuries! The whirling wheels make one rim

of light brilliant as beryl, when looked at in the immensity of their sweep through millenniums and over widely-separated countries. No other movement in history has advanced with such sublimity and beauty. It has turned temporary defeat into ultimate victory, and the strongest kingdoms of earth, the mightiest forces of evil, have been unable to arrest the forward march of the Conqueror riding as on resplendent chariot down the track of time. The sweep of the wheels has been grand and resistless.

Within the circuit of the divine purpose, too, comes every individual. Little circumstances and events time and again in one's personal experience may seem to be without design, and yet they are not. That insect, which by its perseverance in accomplishing a difficult task is said to have carried encouragement to the fainting heart of Bruce in his lonely dungeon, that insignificant spider, in swinging to a place and finally fastening its silken thread there, was a link in the chain of providence, by which God secured the liberties of Scotland. A change in many a one's course of life may grow out of some equally unimportant incident, may be traced to the casual remark of a friend or even stranger.

We have all read how Rome was once

saved by the cackling of geese. The Gauls, it will be recalled, in the dead of night began the precipitous ascent of the Capitoline Hill, hoping thus to capture the eternal city. "Neither man nor dog perceived their coming," says the ancient historian Plutarch, who continues, "but there were sacred geese kept near the temple of Juno, which at other times were plentifully fed, but now, by reason that corn and other provisions were grown scarce for all, were but in a poor condition. The creature is by nature of quick sense, and apprehensive of the least noise, so that these, being moreover watchful through hunger, and restless, immediately discovered the coming of the Gauls, and, running up and down with their noise and cackling, they raised the whole camp." Rome was thus warned and saved. Little circumstances determine destinies. The crowing of a cock brought Peter to repentance. A forgotten strain of music, heard once more after the lapse of years, may awaken memories which revolutionize character. There is no more solemn truth in Scripture than that enunciated by James in his epistle, "Behold, the ships also, though they are so great, and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder."

It often does not take much to give an

entirely new direction to one's life. Andrew D. White, in a certain number of *The Forum*, in relating how he was educated, tells how what seemed an accidental remark affected his whole subsequent career. He had graduated at Yale, and had studied abroad several years. "In 1856," he says, "I returned, and met my class, assembled to take their masters' degrees in course at Yale. Then came the turning-point in my whole education. I had been for some time uneasy, because the way did not seem clear before me; but at this Yale commencement in 1856, while lounging with my classmates in the college yard, I heard some one say that President Wayland of Brown University was speaking in the Alumni Hall. Going to the door, I looked within, and saw upon the platform an old man, heavy-browed, with spectacles resting upon the top of his head. Just at that moment he said, very impressively, that in his opinion the best field of work for graduates was in the West. . . . I had never seen him before; I never saw him afterward. His speech lasted perhaps ten minutes; but it settled a great question for me. I went home, wrote to sundry friends that I was a candidate for the professorship of history in any Western college where there was a chance to get at students." As a con-

sequence, there opened up to him the desired position in the University of Michigan, and thus he entered upon his distinguished educational career, becoming later President of Cornell, and then foreign ambassador and trusted diplomat for the United States; all because he overheard some one say that a certain person was speaking, and because he dropped in for a few minutes to listen to the speaker.

No one, who sees the revolving wheels of God's providential government in the upholding of nature and in the development of history, can doubt that he personally stands related to the unfolding of the divine purpose. Trifles even are decisive in shaping our lives. A visit to some town, the meeting with a friend, the merest remark by an acquaintance, such comparatively insignificant things may change completely the course of our lives. Many a one can mention very slight incidents which have led to disproportionate results. A passing introduction perhaps gave him his life partner, his home, religious or otherwise, with its continually formative influence upon his character which has relations to eternity. Great and little events come alike within the vast sweep of the whirling wheels.

In the second place, observe their compli-

cated and yet straightforward movement. It was, we read, "a wheel within a wheel." The two circumferences cut each other at right angles, like the equator and meridian upon a globe. The involved wheels could thus go north, east, south and west without turning. "They turned not as they went." We have here illustrated the mystery of divine providence. As Cowper says:

> "God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform."

But like the child who holds the parent's watch, we want to *see* the wheels go round, we want to learn the secret of the Lord in all his dark and hidden dealings with mankind and with the individual. Now God would teach us by the figure of the complicated wheels, that it is not ours to understand all his providences. And yet he assures that, while apparently there may be retrograde and lateral movements, on the whole the strangely constructed chariot goes "straight forward." He has in a measure shown us how this is, that our faith may be strengthened for crises beyond our comprehension for the time being.

In nature, for instance, it must have seemed a backward movement in the preparation of the earth for man when a rank vegetation was

made to spring up. But in our present great beds of coal from this very luxuriant and seemingly useless growth we see now the divine wisdom and goodness. When great glaciers from northern regions came grinding over the ground, it must have seemed another retrograde step in the vast process of evolving a globe fit for human habitation, but to-day we rejoice in a soil which was thus pulverized and made fruitful. The wheels crossed each other, and went in every direction, and yet the intricate chariot of providential preparation in the main went forward.

Apply this to nations, and we see seemingly cross-purposes working out the will of God. In the march of Israel to Palestine, they were commanded to "turn back" before they received the culminating order to "go forward." They went right up to the borders of the Holy Land, and then they were turned back to wander forty years in the wilderness. It was a retrograde and yet in the end an advance movement. A generation of idolaters was cut off, and a disciplined people, capable of more rapid progress, were given the country flowing with milk and honey. The wheels moved backward and sideward, before they really went forward.

This is also illustrated in classic story.

How did the celebrated Themistocles triumph at Salamis? The Greeks, like the Israelites, were temporarily turned back. The famous Xerxes with his unnumbered hosts was steadily moving on to the conquest of all Greece. The Athenians had fled to their ships, and their wives and children to the adjacent island of Salamis. The Grecians, yielding to despair, resolved one night to steal away under cover of the darkness, giving up the unequal contest. Themistocles, their commander, argued against the disgraceful retreat that was proposed, but in vain, whereupon he determined to put them into a position where they would be forced to fight. Pretending to be friendly to the Persian general, he secretly sent him word that the Athenians were intending to escape that night, but that the flight could be prevented if ships were immediately sent to take possession of "all the straits and passages." The Greeks thus by private advices from their own leader to the enemy were compelled to "turn back" from their meditated and attempted flight. Enclosed in a narrow channel, there was no alternative but to join issue with the foe. With Xerxes under canopy of gold on the mainland directing the forces there in combination with a fleet of a thousand ships on the sea, the Athenians in the desperateness of

the situation were nerved to the sublimest effort of their lives, and while their wives and children on the neighboring island of Salamis prayed as they had never done before, the men moved resolutely forward, with only one hundred and eighty sail against one thousand, but they conquered, and they gained undying fame instead of infamy, and ever since that eventful autumn day, 480 B. C., their praises have been sung by posterity.

There may be a retrograde before there is an advance movement. That is the way the whirling wheels of divine providence are constructed. We have seen it repeatedly in the history of Christ's Church. In the early centuries the Christians doubtless prayed for the conversion of the barbarian Goths. Those northern tribes were to be Christianized, but note the mysterious way in which the matter was accomplished. Some Goths swept down into Asia, and, returning, they took from a village in Cappadocia to their barbarian settlements north of the Danube certain Christians as captives. These slaves propagated the gospel among their masters. A descendant of theirs was the distinguished Ulphilas, who became bishop of the converted Goths, and who translated most of the Scriptures into their language. In other words, there was a back-

ward movement before there was a forward one, Christians were enslaved before Goths were converted, and the one was in order eventually to the other.

How was Ireland in the fifth century Christianized? How was St. Patrick of Scottish birth to be made a missionary to the Irish, becoming ultimately their patron saint? The common version of the story is, that his family first moved to Gaul or France, and there one day the youth of sixteen, before he had yet become a Christian, went down to the beach. It was simply a casual stroll that he took by the seashore. Just then there happened along some pirates, who landed, made him a prisoner, and sold him into slavery in Ireland. There he was on Erin's Isle, a bondman, unconverted, and yet he was destined to redeem that land for Christ. Did he understand the mysterious providence? Certainly not, and if his great mission at that period of his life had been revealed to him, the wheels of providence would have seemed to move backward. But that acquaintance with a superstitious and unevangelized people was the cause, in after years when he had recovered his freedom, of his returning to the country of his former captivity to preach the gospel, which he meanwhile had found precious in his own experi-

ence. By such peculiar turns of fortune were the heathen Irish Christianized. There was wheel within wheel in the accomplishment of the divine purpose.

Coming to individuals, there are just as mysterious providences; the wheels are no less complicated. Joseph received an intimation of his future greatness in the inspired dream of his brothers' sheaves bowing to his. There was not much appearance of a fulfilment of that prophecy, when he was cast by them into the pit. Was that the way he was to be advanced by providence? It was, although he knew it not. The wheels moved backward. He was sold into Egypt, and the chariot gave a great lurch to one side. You remember all the gyrations of fortune, and circlings of wheels, but the chariot by which he was borne got him to the throne at last. A trying experience of ours is often the very means of our advancement. Sir Walter Scott was lame from infancy, and that fact prevented him from entering upon military life, for which he had a strong predilection. He was in this providential way saved to literature. His mother therefore was accustomed to speak of the physical infirmity which disqualified him for the army as a blessing in disguise. More than once the great romancer himself said

that if his father had left him a comfortable income, he probably would have spent his time in reading and not in writing. He claimed that he could write best when crowded, and hence the heavy debts hanging over his estate, renowned Abbottsford, gave him the mental quickening which redounded to his lasting fame and the world's great benefit. Carlyle said, "It is even a question, whether, had not want, discomfort and distress warrants been busy at Stratford-on-Avon, Shakespeare himself had not lived killing calves or combing wool!" Adversity may prove an ultimate blessing, and especially does a temporal setback often set us spiritually forward. We are in the midst of whirling wheels whose complicated movement to all who are properly exercised by life's discipline is in the end straightforward.

Once more, the wheels of God's triumphal car roll on with discriminating wisdom—"their rings," it is said, "full of eyes." There are no blind forces even in nature. There is design, wonderful adjustment there. Hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen are united in exactly the right proportions. Eliminate one of any of the fundamental elements that constitute the universe, and it would dissolve into ashes. The bee, that gathers its honey, by an ingen-

ious arrangement of providence distributes the pollen, the fecundating dust, and impregnates flowers which otherwise, say botanists, would become extinct. There are eyes in the apparently unintelligent round of nature, eyes in the whirling wheels.

And in history, the observant student can well say in the words of Scripture, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth." It was no accident, when Charles Martel in the battle of Tours drove back the Saracens already established in Spain, and thereby saved Europe from the Mohammedan subjugation which in the eighth century seemed imminent. That was no accidental turn in the fortunes of the false prophet, whose cause, in his followers, had hitherto been unchecked. God saw that he must interfere at that critical moment, or Europe would be lost to Christianity. The wheels of providence had "eyes."

It was no chance which raised the great storm, with whose help was defeated the magnificent Spanish Armada, moving for the decisive final blow to staggering Protestantism; it was no chance, whose breath originated the mighty tempest by which the "invincible" fleet was broken and scattered, but it was a blast of the Almighty, it was a providential

turn of the wheel "full of eyes." Very appropriately did the medal struck to commemorate the event bear this Scriptural motto, "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them." God saw that it was then to be decided which was to prevail, the old medieval or the new progressive civilization, and as he saw that the latter was better than the former for mankind, he made his chariot to move accordingly. There is infinite intelligence in the whirling wheels, as historic example after example proves.

The landing of William of Orange in England in 1688, and his enthronement there are quite generally recognized as having subserved the cause of civil and religious liberty. Macaulay in speaking of the very elements favoring the good cause at this point used the following language: "The wind had blown strong from the east while the prince wished to sail down the Channel, had turned to the south when he wished to enter Torbay, had sunk to a calm during the disembarkation, and, as soon as the disembarkation was completed, had risen to a storm, and had met the pursuers in the face." The winds, veering from one point of the compass to another and always in the interest of what was for the higher civilization, were whirling wheels as full of eyes as

they were precisely one hundred years before in contributing to the destruction of the Spanish Armada with an intelligence that seemed human, and that was likewise divine.

Then this division of our theme has its individual application. The illustrious Augustine of the fourth century is an example. His mother prayed for his conversion, but she worked against the very means which God used to bring about the desire of her heart. The dissolute youth proposed to go to Rome, but she feared the effect upon him of the great, wicked city, and she tried in every way to defeat his purpose. He, however, went, and later got still farther away from the maternal influence, as by advice of a friend he went on to Milan, where he heard the gifted Ambrose preach, under whose powerful presentation of the truth he was converted, being led into the Christian life by a course of action which she deprecated as most dangerous, for she did not want him to go to Rome and Milan. The faithful Monica could not see what was to be the outcome, but divine providence was not blind; the wheels, which whirled the son hither and thither, from city to city, were "full of eyes," and from the beginning saw what was to be the happy end.

At the close of the line of thought which

has been pursued, we can see the significance of what in the prophet's vision was *above* the wheels. To crown the whole there was the appearance of a man, even of the sympathetic Son of man, outspreading over his wondrous chariot a bright canopy. "There was the likeness of a firmament," we read, resplendent as crystal, and giving unity to all that was revealed, and we are reminded of a cathedral at Pisa which has, we are informed, a musical dome. The visitor is surprised, as every footfall, every discordant noise, is caught by that magic roof, and returned in exquisite harmony. The hum of a great congregation swells away in the high spaces like the distant roll of a great organ. So the whir of the revolving machinery of divine providence, the rattle of God's chariot on the pavement, every groan, every cry of distress from the bottom of the wheels rising from those who have been rolled under in reverses of fortune, all are turned into a heavenly symphony by the crystal dome of the celestial firmament. Under the bright overarching of a Christian faith, all the harsh discords of earth are softened and blended into the soothing melody of heaven.

Ours, therefore, can be an unfaltering trust, since we know, however various and trying may be our experiences, that the Supreme

Ruler doeth all things well, and that some day his most mysterious dealings with us will be made clear. In that temple above, with a dome more wonderful than that of the cathedral at Pisa, the trials and temptations of the present without a solitary exception will be seen to have been in entire harmony with the great truth of a kind, overruling providence whereby all things have been made to work together for good to us who have loved God.

THE GULF STREAM OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY

"We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth."—JOHN 1 : 45.

"And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."—LUKE 24 : 27.

"All things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me."—LUKE 24 : 44.

II

THE GULF STREAM OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY

EUROPEANS long noted with a curious interest articles floated to them over the ocean from unknown shores. A Portuguese pilot had seen upon the waves a piece of rudely carved wood. Pine-trees and cane-stalks and other vegetable growths that were unfamiliar to Europe and its neighboring isles made people wonder whence these came. On the coasts of Ireland and Scotland and Norway was thrown by the billows from time to time what evidently came from tropical forests. There were even reports of canoes, and of human bodies with strange bronze features, constituting part of the sea's drift from the west. Whence came all these? No one knew, but an increasing number were led to believe in an undiscovered continent as the source of the mysterious freightage of old Neptune. Hope and belief were thus strengthened in Columbus, and he sailed away to solve the problem, and in 1492 America was discovered.

It was the now well understood Gulf Stream

which, bearing this and that from a far-away country, awoke expectation and faith in Europeans. This mighty ocean current of warm water in the midst of cold, at the behest of the continually blowing trade-winds of the tropics, rushes forth from our Gulf of Mexico —a river which is two thousand times larger than the Mississippi, and which is sometimes forty and again three hundred miles and more wide. It rolls northeastward along the entire United States coast, though at some distance therefrom, then strikes across the vast Atlantic, through its very heart, toward Europe, and after many a turn, north and south and east, it completes its course of over three thousand miles, to bless with a temperate clime and a luxuriant vegetation regions that otherwise would be frozen and barren and desolate. Its heat is said to be sufficient to "melt daily a mass of iron as large as Mount Washington," and this it distributes over western Europe, even Arctic cold being thus modified with salutary effect.

Now the Gulf Stream not only carried warmth and fruitfulness across the Atlantic, but it was also the means of starting the course of empire westward by carrying to the old world evidence of a new continent. By actual experiment on a sufficiently large scale

we could to-day prove that articles committed to the Gulf Stream at its source as it dashes past southern Florida would ultimately be carried to points where expectation of old was born by reason of similar drift that then appeared. Like this ocean current is the stream of Messianic Prophecy flowing down through the past and widening in its course and blessing every nation it touches by awaking a great hopefulness.

Placing ourselves at a time just prior to the great discovery of the Kingdom of the Truth, we find that many devout souls were in a state of expectancy. Luke tells us that the aged Simeon was "looking for the consolation of Israel," and was confident that "he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ," and that the saintly Anna was similarly minded, and that there were still others who were "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Mark describes the wealthy Joseph of Arimathæa, that "councillor of honorable estate," as one who was "looking for the kingdom of God." Matthew informs us of wise men coming from the East with the same pulsing hope. Indeed, the New Testament is confessedly full of what Wordsworth would call "intimations of immortality," of a better day to dawn, even (as Zacharias proph-

esied) "the dayspring from on high." So fervent was the Messianic expectation in the first century, that Josephus says, "That which chiefly excited the Jews to war was an ambiguous prophecy, which was also found in the sacred books, that at that time some one within their country should arise who would obtain the empire of the whole world," and this Jewish writer had nothing sadder to record than the rise and fall of various false Christs.

Classical writers also of the beginning of the Christian era testify to the same expectation. Suetonius, who wrote the "Lives of the Cæsars," says: "A firm persuasion had long prevailed through all the East that it was fated for the empire of the world at that time to devolve on some who should go forth from Judæa." Tacitus speaks of a similar belief being current, "that the East would renew its strength, and they that should go forth from Judæa should be rulers of the world." Though Virgil, 40 B. C., may have written his fourth Eclogue in honor of a son of a literary friend, he yet could hardly have used such significant language, as is found in this poem, had he not caught the spirit of what have been called "the unconscious prophecies of heathendom." How almost Messianic are these lines, for example, from the Eclogue:

"Come, claim thine honors, for the time draws nigh,
Babe of immortal race, the wondrous seed of Jove!
Lo, at thy coming how the starry spheres
Are moved to trembling, and the earth below,
And widespread seas, and the blue vault of heaven!
How all things joy to greet the rising Age!"

No doubt therefore can exist as to the fact of a peculiarly expectant mental state about the time of the actual advent of the Lord.

Whence came these rising hopes? They came from what had floated down the stream of Messianic prophecy from a very remote time, just as the drift of the Gulf Stream, upon being carried to Europe, made certain choice and prophetic spirits like Columbus believe in another and a new world. And as we might commit ourselves to the warm current issuing from its source in the Gulf of Mexico till we were landed where canoes and pines in 1492 went ashore to stir the old world into the new life of modern discovery, so can we start with the fountain head of Messianic prophecy in the tropics of Eden, and by simply following the current find ourselves eventually at the "fulness of time" when the Messiah did appear, and was recognized by reason of the prophecies then culminating and having in him their manifest fulfilment.

Nor will there be about them anything

vague and uncertain, as in the oracular sayings of classic story. You recollect, for instance, how it was in the temple of Isis at Pompeii (whose Last Days Bulwer delineates), how the statue moved its head, opened its lips, and with a hollow voice gave forth its oracle for some consulting merchants whose ships were to sail next day for Alexandria. This was the predictive utterance:

> "There are waves like chargers that meet and glow,
> There are graves ready wrought in the rocks below:
> On the brow of the future the dangers lour,
> But blest are your barks in the fearful hour."

Nothing could be more plain, said a worshiper who added, "There is to be a storm at sea, as there very often is at the beginning of autumn, but our vessels are to be saved." The priests themselves, however, did not seem so certain in their own private hearts. One of them remarked to another upon the improvement in the voice of the statue since a mechanical change had been suggested and made, while the other said that if the storm did come and did even wreck the vessels, yet the oracle would prove true, for in one sense ships at the bottom of the sea were "blest" in being forever at rest. The famous Delphic Oracle once said to the rich Crœsus who consulted it, "If

Crœsus crosses the Halys, and prosecutes a war with Persia, a mighty empire will be overthrown;" and it was even so, but it was his own empire. The oracle had so worded its wisdom, that, whatever the issue, it would not have to recede and retract.

The Messianic prophecies are not thus equivocal, capable of being taken either way, conceived with the very idea of deceiving. They will rather be seen on examination to be so true and minute, that we will exclaim with Philip, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth." In selecting some predictions about Christ, we naturally would like to know those to which he himself called attention on that eventful occasion, when, walking with the two doubting disciples toward Emmaus, he began with Moses, and "interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." But we are left in ignorance as to the particular prophetic forecasts upon which he commented, except that he indicated his main lines of thought in that he said, "All things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me."

Under suggestion from this division of the Old Testament into the law, the prophets, and

the psalms, except that these terms will be taken in the modern and not in the ancient sense, we will weigh anchor on the Gulf Stream of Messianic Prophecy by starting at the very beginning with "the law of Moses." We cannot stop to discuss each prediction in detail, because for the present we desire to get the truer effect of a wide sweep of prophetic utterances, not as they may be, but as they generally have been interpreted. We cannot tarry either to note the primary and secondary references which are acknowledged in the predictions. Nor does it come within the scope of our present trend of thought to debate disputed dates of books which at the latest long antedate the verifications. We will give ourselves at once to the current, and move rapidly on, as the majestic stream of Messianic Prophecy may naturally and easily lead.

At the very dawn of Biblical history, we are issuing from the tropical beauty of Eden with the prophetic announcement that the seed of the woman should "bruise" the head of the serpent, which had bruised the heel of humanity at the time of the temptation and the fall in the garden. The seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent. That primeval promise must have meant

something, and could have signified nothing less than a great recovery on the part of mankind from the injury sustained in the calamity of original sin.

We sweep along the current, and we next find that the blessing is to come, not only in the line of the race, but through the Semitic branch thereof, as the rhythmical words of Noah show:

> "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem;
> And let Canaan be his servant.
> God enlarge Japheth,
> And let him dwell in the tents of Shem."

Therein is briefly outlined by the seer the religious ascendency of Shem, the political primacy of Japheth, and the social degradation of Canaan; and the descendants of these have answered to the forecast, in the servitude of large portions of the human family like the Canaanites and Africans, in the prominence and power of the Japhetic nations specially centered in Europe, and in the religion of the world, Christianity, having come from the Semitic peoples of Asia. Shem has had the preeminence foretold in that the Messianic stream flowed by his tents.

The current on which we are being borne takes another turn, and we are in the line of

Jewish descent on our way toward the promised Christ, in that to Abraham was the assurance given, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." There is thus a chosen *nationality* for the transmission of the blessing. We all know how the Hebrews were entrusted with the oracles of God, and furnished the ancestry of the Lord.

Still more definite is the designation, next, of the Messianic *tribe*, as one is singled out of the twelve tribes of the nation by the glowing prophecy:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh come;
And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

That Christ did spring from Judah is a simple matter of history, and it is also well known that he came before the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Roman Titus when the scepter of power did depart from the Jewish nation.

So strong now has become the current of Messianic Prophecy, that even the half-heathen seer, Balaam, is impelled by the sight of the Israelites from his position on a hill-top commanding a magnificent view of them in the valley, to break out into the rapturous words, which fairly throb with the thought of

the splendid destinies wrapt up in the peculiar people:

> "I see him, but not now:
> I behold him, but not nigh:
> There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,
> And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

We hear the echo of that inspired utterance afterward in Deuteronomy and Joshua and Micah and Nehemiah, and the familiar Star of Bethlehem is its brilliant fulfilment.

The tide is full set, the course of the current is unmistakable, when Moses himself gives his great deliverance, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Very naturally the woman of Samaria shared the hope of the Samaritans, who received the five books of Moses, while she said with all confidence, "I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ)." She must have often read in her Samaritan Bible of the coming of the prophet like unto Moses, and from such clear words she could not have been otherwise than expectant, not only of a Messianic age, but also of a personal Messiah, and the Lord himself must have had this among other Mosaic prophecies in mind when he said, Moses "wrote

of me." Thus have we swept through "the law of Moses" on our swelling Gulf Stream.

Another grand sweep will take us through the "psalms." In the particular family line of the "sweet psalmist" himself was the Messiah to appear, for repeatedly occurs a promise like this:

> "I will not lie unto David;
> His seed shall endure for ever,
> And his throne as the sun before me."

And he died in hope, his "last words" being about

> "One that ruleth over men righteously,"

while he added,

> "Verily my house is not so with God;
> Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant."

He felt that a son or descendant of his was to have perpetual dominion, a "son" whom he yet in one psalm called "Lord"—an anomaly with which, you recollect, Christ puzzled the Jews of his day. How definite were the manifold prophecies which named David as an ancestor of the Messiah appears, when in the first century the common title of the expected Christ was "Son of David."

Floating swiftly along our Gulf Stream we

gather other Messianic material from the psalms. "Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption," had very little application to the psalmist, for his flesh did see corruption, and his tomb could be seen at the time of Peter's Pentecostal address, but the prophetic words did receive a most striking fulfilment in the resurrection of great David's greater Son. There are also in the psalms very significant details. When we read these various minute touches,

> "And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink,"
> "They part my garments among them,
> And upon my vesture do they cast lots,"
> "They pierced my hands and my feet,"

we are brought very near to the cross of Calvary with its familiar but sad incidents, though the descriptive lines were written hundreds of years before the events thus foreshadowed.

How long is the Gulf Stream? over three thousand miles? We have gone over two of the millennial divisions of our Messianic Stream "in the law of Moses," and in "the psalms," and now we sweep out into the times of the "prophets" themselves. Isaiah stands forth preeminent. He prophesies, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall

call his name Immanuel," that is, God with us; likewise called "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God." Here we instinctively think of the Virgin Mary, and of her firstborn with his divine characteristics. The same prophet speaks of a land "glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light," and we have therein the whole Galilæan ministry by the Sea of Gennesaret pictured as with a single stroke of a master artist's brush. In that marvelous fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which has made infidels believers, and which has confounded skeptics who would not be convinced, we have a vivid portrayal of the *suffering* Messiah, so enigmatical till the Christ of history exactly filled the prophetic outline, even to minutiæ, for when we read that the wondrous Person "opened not his mouth," we recall the patient silence which was so inexplicable to Pilate. When we read again, "They made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death," we are struck with the correspondence to subsequent facts, when the Lord *was* "with the wicked" in being crucified between two thieves, and was "with the rich in his death" in that he was buried in the private garden of the wealthy Joseph, while the rich Nicodemus brought for his burial a

hundred pounds of fragrant "myrrh and aloes."

From Isaiah we pass to Micah, and hear him prophesying that out of humble Bethlehem "shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting," and this was sufficiently specific to make the chief priests and scribes more than seven hundred years later officially declare that Bethlehem was to be the birthplace of the promised One.

Subsequent prophets never for a moment lose sight of the coming Messiah. Jeremiah says, "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch;" Ezekiel says, "My servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd;" and Daniel says that after a mystical seventy weeks "shall the anointed one be cut off," "to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness."

Haggai says, "I will fill this house with glory," "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former," but as the second temple was not specially glorious of itself—was indeed so much inferior to the first that the older Jews actually "wept" with disappointment—the greater glory promised for it must have been none other than the coming to

it of the Messiah. He therefore was connected by this prophecy with this second house, whose rebuilding by Herod was never counted a third structure, and whose destruction by the Roman armies 70 A. D., fixed and defined the time within which the Christ should appear, and before the post-exilic temple was forever destroyed there did come to it One who was glorious, "fairer than the children of men."

Zechariah's predictions, too, were minute, presenting still other features by which the Christ might be recognized. Said this prophet, "They shall look unto me whom they have pierced," and the crucified One with his pierced side comes to view through the intervening ages. The King, whom this same sacred writer represents as coming "lowly, and riding upon an ass," while yet "his dominion shall be from sea to sea," suggests the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and the still more triumphant march of the present around the earth. The passage, "They weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver," which were cast "unto the potter, in the house of the Lord," makes dramatic that scene of Judas throwing down in the temple the same number of silver pieces, wherewith the innocent blood of his Master had been betrayed.

What a wealth of Messianic delineations is

being gathered while we are being hurried along the Stream of Prophecy! We reach the flood-tide in that last of the prophets, Malachi, who exclaims with exultant hope, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple," and we see at once John the Baptist, and Jesus of Nazareth whose way he prepared by announcing his coming and by pointing him out as the long-expected Lamb of God.

Our Gulf Stream of Messianic Prophecy, which we have been following through "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms," all the way from beauteous Eden, breaks at last upon the first century with the melody of the ocean's gleaming surf, with the musical sound of "many waters" that sparkle with a gladsome light. "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write," and we have found him by the minutiæ of prophetic utterance through thousands of years. To vary the figure permeating all we have said, as a red strand runs through all the cordage of the British navy, we have traced through whole millenniums the scarlet thread of Messianic Prophecy. Or shifting our point of view yet again, as we glance backward through the vista of centuries, we are reminded of a not

infrequent scene in the mountains. Alpine ranges, like Virgil's "Ossa piled on Pelion," stretch away for miles, peak succeeding to peak, and in the early morning, while dark shadows lie along the valleys and far up the steep slopes, summit after summit, every Mont Blanc is gilded by the rising sun. So a long sweep of vision into the past shows a succession of mountain-tops golden with the rays of the Sun of righteousness, and while there are many low vales unlighted, the towering heights are so illumined with glowing prophecies, that there is one stream of Messianic light from Eden to the Cross, and the radiance reaches to the present, and shall go corruscating down to the remotest future.

THE HEROIC JEREMIAH AND THE DOWNFALL OF JUDAH

"For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, and against the people of the land."—JER. 1 : 18.

III

THE HEROIC JEREMIAH AND THE DOWNFALL OF JUDAH

We are to consider at this time the heroic Jeremiah and the downfall of Judah. Though he predicted desolation to the kingdom, and though he lived to see the destruction wrought, he was hopeful for the future. He believed God's purpose would ultimately triumph.

What was the problem of the Old Testament dispensation? It was to develop a chosen people who were to be a blessing to all mankind. We can see the long process of accomplishment. The patriarch becomes the tribe, which in turn becomes ten tribes, and then a nation confessedly entrusted with the truth as no other nationality was. But how often we see apparent failure stamped on the movement which we had felt to be divine!

There was, for instance, the oppression in Egypt. This can no longer be regarded as fable, for archæology has in our day brought forth from his burial the mummy of the great oppressor himself, Rameses II, which now adorns

a museum at Ghizeh on the Nile, while one of the store-cities, Pithom, which he built by his Hebrew slaves, has actually been unearthed. Egypt's own records are no longer silent on this matter. A stone has lately risen from the dust in confirmation of the Bible story. The eminent Egyptologist, Dr. Petrie, in excavations at Thebes during 1895–96, brought to light a black slab over ten feet high, on which three different Pharaohs had successively cut and erased inscriptions, when Merenptah, the supposed Pharaoh of the Exodus, coveting it for a temple he was erecting, turned its thrice inscribed face to the wall, and on its back which he made its front he engraved a battle hymn, which includes this statement, "Israel is crushed, is without seed." Surely the cruel Pharaoh, with whom Scripture has made us familiar, did crush the Israelites in requiring them to make bricks without straw, and if Professor Sayce of Oxford is correct in taking the words "without seed" to mean "without offspring," there is a striking confirmation of the Biblical account of the slaying of the male children of the Hebrews. Or if the meaning be that Israel was stripped of its grain, of its seed in the materialistic sense, this is equally confirmatory of the oppression described in Exodus. But Israel survived this slavery, at-

tested by both the Mosaic and monumental records, because she had God on her side.

Again, when the people escaped from bondage and settled in Palestine and grew to be a resplendent kingdom under David and Solomon, disaster that seemed irremediable came once more in the disruption of the nation into northern and southern powers, into Israel and Judah. And as if that were not enough, after about two centuries of this divided existence, Israel fell before Assyria, and her people were carried away to be forever known as the "ten lost tribes." On this point, too, we have the monuments confirming the Scriptures. Of the downfall of Israel, the northern kingdom, whose capital was the city of Samaria, the book of Kings says: "The king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away unto Assyria." Sargon's record for the year 722 B. C., is, "The city Samaria I besieged, 27,290 inhabitants of it I carried away captive." How could there be otherwise than dismay at such a calamity? Was God after all to be defeated?

But worse was to follow, for Judah's turn came next. As early as Hezekiah came Sennacherib for the humiliation of the southern kingdom. Here also the Scriptural and monumental records are in harmony. The inspired

penman says: "In the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them." On grotesque bulls, winged and human-headed, Sennacherib inscribed: "As for Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six of his strong cities . . . I captured. . . . Hezekiah himself I shut up like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem, his royal city."

But the final overthrow of Judah did not come till Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon appeared on the stage of action, with successive deportations of Jews from about 605 B. C., and onward up to the great catastrophe itself, which, with the razing to the ground of Jerusalem, must have seemed an irretrievable loss. It is this of which we are to treat somewhat in detail, with the prophet Jeremiah as the center around which the story revolves. He was the most prominent figure through the reigns of several kings. We shall see him not only forecasting the future, but much more participating in the activities of his own generation. His great aim was to save Judah from the threatened destruction.

The country lay between the powerful kingdoms of Egypt and Assyria or Babylonia, and it had to be a dependency of the one or the

other, and therefore there were always two parties in the court, according as this or that foreign alliance was urged. Jeremiah doubtless regretted that a choice had to be made at all as between the two, but he recognized the situation, that Judah, as Stanley has said, was like "a hunted animal—now flying, now standing at bay—between two huge beasts of prey, which, whilst their main object is to devour each other, turn aside from time to time to snatch at the smaller victim that has crossed their midway path." The prophet had the foresight to see in Babylon and not in Egypt the coming power, and hence he advocated the cultivating of friendly relations with the former, though in this he stood practically alone, as he did in the religious reform which he preached, there being against him, according to his prophecy, kings, princes, priests and people.

When in youth he was called to his great prophetic work, he was reluctant to put his shoulder to the wheel. He naturally was of a timid and shrinking disposition, and he pleaded that he could not speak and that he was but a child. But God promised to make him "a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land." He therefore obeyed the divine summons, though in the com-

plications that subsequently arose, and with no wife or children to comfort him in his lonely hours, he sometimes wished that he had never been born. He could have said with our English dramatist:

> "The time is out of joint. O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right."

He first saw the light in the small village of Anathoth, an hour's walk from Jerusalem. There also he received his prophetic call, while he was a young man not far from the age of twenty. His preaching of a reformation was not popular with his fellow villagers, who plotted against his life. From the nest of conspirators at his home he escaped, and Jerusalem became the scene of his labors, while the pious King Josiah doubtless seconded his efforts. Indeed, five years after the prophet's call, in the repairing of the temple was found the long-lost book of the law, which has been presumed to be our book of Deuteronomy, and this hastened the reformation, of which there was sad need. Idolatry had been substituted for the temple worship of Jehovah. Incense was burned to the queen of heaven. In Jerusalem there were as many altars, we are informed, as there were streets, and we are reminded of Athens in the days of Paul,

who was amazed at the multitude of statues everywhere, and who may have thought of the Roman satirist's remark that it was easier to find a god than a man in the Grecian capital. There was the same lack of men in the holy city, and hence the significance of these words of Jeremiah, "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man." We recall again what classic story relates regarding that quaint old philosopher, Diogenes, who went peering through the streets of Athens at noonday with a lantern, and who when asked what he was looking for replied that he was trying to find a man. There prevailed also Sabbath-breaking and perjury and theft and murder and impurity on every high hill and under every green tree. Human sacrifices were offered to the fire-god Moloch.

Do you wonder that Jeremiah prophesied dire evils unless there was a reformation? No nation to-day can long survive with the very foundations of morality and religion giving way, with desecration of the Lord's Day, with drunkenness, with political corruption and social vice, with all such evils increasing. The prophet was faithful, and declared that unless there was a change the Lord's word

was, "I will make Jerusalem heaps, a dwelling place of jackals; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation." Then this vision of fearful import was made known: "I see a seething caldron; and the face thereof is from the north," indicating that "out of the north evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land." Scythian and Chaldean invasions were thus pictured. A vast metal vessel was seen boiling furiously upon a pile of wood. As the inflammable materials consumed, the pot was gradually settling on the southward side, and in time would overturn and pour its hot contents over poor Judah.

Such were the realistic warnings given, and when there came the providential finding of the law with similar threatenings, a great revolution was wrought in the sentiments and lives of the people, and the predicted disaster seemed likely to be averted, till there came the untimely death of King Josiah. Pharaohnechoh was marching against Assyria, when Josiah mistakenly went forth to obstruct his advance, perhaps under pressure from the Babylonian party, and an arrow shot at a venture smote Judah's king, and he was carried home in his chariot a dying man. Great were the lamentations of the nation, and Jeremiah wrote an elegy that voiced the general sor-

row; henceforth there were troublous times indeed.

The second son of Josiah was elevated to the vacant throne under the name of Jehoahaz, but Necoh in three months, returning from an Assyrian victory, deposed him, and carried him off to Egypt where he died in his captivity, and his mournful fate stirred the sympathetic Jeremiah to say, "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."

Pharaoh-nechoh placed over Judah as his vassal the elder son of Josiah, namely, Jehoiakim, who favored the reaction to idolatry. To pay his Egyptian tribute he exacted heavy taxes. He also proposed to make his reign splendid as a great building era. He erected a magnificent palace, which he roofed with cedar and painted with vermilion, while he compelled free citizens to work upon it "without wages." He was not a monarch who would listen to unfavorable prophecies, and one prophet, who had fled for his life into Egypt, he had brought back and slain.

How did the new order of things please Jeremiah? He began to declare what he felt to be the solemn truth, as he asserted that Jerusalem should yet be like Shiloh, which, as

every one knew, was a complete ruin. For this prophecy he was mobbed, but he was rescued by some influential friends. Meanwhile, Nebuchadnezzar, the great conqueror, appeared on the eastern horizon, and before him Pharaoh-nechoh went down. People fled in consternation before the fierce warriors of the Babylonian monarch, and even some gypsy-like Rechabites who were accustomed to a wandering tent life were seen in Jerusalem with their strange customs. Jeremiah, knowing their habits of abstinence from wine, and desiring to draw a present lesson, proposed to entertain them with the flowing bowl, which they at once refused in accordance with a pledge handed down, they said, from a revered ancestor. The prophet immediately commended their spirit of obedience, and wished that Jerusalem might obey the Lord, and submit to the approaching Nebuchadnezzar. He shivered a bottle to atoms in the presence of spectators to show what awaited the holy city.

He was arrested and put in the stocks, but as Paul from his Roman imprisonment wrote epistles that still live, and as Bunyan wrote his Pilgrim's Progress in Bedford jail, and as Luther translated the Bible into German at the Wartburg Castle, where he was detained,

so Jeremiah, by the hand of Baruch, wrote out his prophecies when he was restrained from going abroad to speak the truth, when he enjoyed at most only a restricted freedom. On the occasion of a public fast he sent his amanuensis to read what had been written to the throngs about the temple, and a profound impression being made he was summoned into the presence of the princes, who on hearing the scroll read advised him and his master to secrete themselves, as they valued their lives, for the matter would have to be reported to the king. When Jehoiakim had heard the facts, and had learned that the roll was available for his majesty, he sent for it, and what followed is one of the most dramatic scenes in Biblical history.

The king on a December day sat warming himself over a charcoal fire on a brasier in his winter palace, and a courtier began to unroll the scroll and to read. A column was finished, two or three columns more were read, and the contents of another column were being made known, when the king became furious at what he considered treasonable sentiments, and with a penknife he cut the parchment into shreds, which he flung into the fire, where they curled for a moment, one by one, into a beautiful blaze, and then

dissolved into ashes. Some of the courtiers tried to dissuade him from such a summary and contemptuous destruction of what a holy prophet had written, but he did not care to listen to a prophecy which had declared, "The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land." He seemed to imagine that the burning of the prediction would prevent its fulfilment.

The burned prophecy of Jeremiah was straightway rewritten, with additions, one of which said of the king, "His dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost." There came first, however, ignominious submission to the very Babylonian monarch whose coming had been foretold, as Jehoiakim was carried in chains, with others, including Daniel, to Babylon, only to be reinstated after swearing allegiance to his lord, Nebuchadnezzar. The shame of his position he felt, and at the first opportunity he revolted, but in the disorders which followed he is supposed to have perished as was predicted. Which eventually triumphed, the dead king or the living prophet? All that the latter prophesied came to pass, and having now lived through three reigns he was ready for a fourth, the same "iron pillar."

A son succeeded the father on the throne, but was Jehoiachin long to wear the crown? With a courage like "brazen walls" Jeremiah delivered his message on this point, as he said, Though this son "were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence," and deliver thee "into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon." We can imagine the prophet holding up his own signet flashing on his hand to make more impressive the illustration. Note this signet which is to appear again. Jehoiachin was to be torn like a very signet from the hand of an offended God to be made one of the jewels of the Babylonian monarch, and as a matter of fact he had reigned only a trifle over three months when Nebuchadnezzar came and made an easy conquest of Judah, and bore him and the queen mother and Ezekiel and some of the choicest spirits of the land away into a captivity from which the king never returned, though he lived in his exile for years. For thirty-seven years he lay in prison, and then for the rest of his life he was permitted to sit at the conqueror's table.. Jeremiah deplored the loss of so many excellent citizens, and all through needless rebellion against what he had counseled. He compared the exiles to a basket of good figs, while those who remained were like

a basket of bad figs in comparison, and he sent a tender message to the captives, telling them to accept the situation which had been providentially ordered. He assured them that the captivity was to continue seventy years, and therefore they should "plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them," till the time of the deliverance came.

One more king was to reign in Judah, and that was Zedekiah, the third son of Josiah who had been enthroned. He was a mere vassal of the Babylonian monarch. In due time he broke his solemn oath of allegiance. At once Jeremiah appeared on the streets with a wooden collar on his neck to symbolize the certain bondage that would follow this act of revolt. A prophet with a different message followed him up with the cheerful and confident declaration that in two years the captivity would end, and, waxing bold, this smooth-speaking prophet snatched the yoke from Jeremiah's neck, snapped it asunder, and said that even so should the yoke of Babylon be speedily broken. So far from this being true, the captivity continued, but the false prophet did not, for to him our hero said, "This year thou shalt die," and in two months he was a corpse.

Meanwhile, Nebuchadnezzar's armies came

rolling on to put down the rebellious Zedekiah. They laid siege to Jerusalem, and the matter looked serious enough to make the Jews emancipate fellow Hebrews who were declared by the intrepid Jeremiah to be held in unlawful slavery. Just then Pharaoh Hophra advanced to Judah's assistance, when the Babylonian forces withdrew to meet the new emergency. Now that the danger seemed passed, the citizens of Jerusalem, against the earnest remonstrance of Jeremiah, reenslaved the freedmen, and the prophet seemed to feel that the case was hopeless. He insisted that the Babylonians would return, and they did as soon as they defeated the Egyptian army. But before the reinvestment of the city by the besiegers, the prophet was passing out of a gate to go to his native Anathoth on some business, when he was arrested and charged with deserting to the Chaldeans, an accusation that had some color of truth in that he had steadily advised the king and all to save themselves from destruction by a timely submission. He, however, was no cowardly deserter, and when he heard the charge he answered indignantly, "It is false." But that denial did not prevent him from being beaten and thrust into an underground dungeon in connection with the home of one of the princes, and in

that noisome place he was kept for "many days," till the king in his increasing extremity sent for him to get the latest word from the Lord.

Think you that the "iron pillar" will now become supple, that the prophet will modify his message in the hope of securing his liberty? He has only to soften matters somewhat, to prophesy smooth things, and he shall be freed from his rocky dungeon with its subterranean cells. What then will be his answer to the royal questioner, "Is there any word from the Lord?" The immediate reply is, "There is," while he adds, "Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." In this prediction repeatedly made he was no sycophant currying favor with powers which he thought were to be, for he prophesied boldly that Babylon itself should in time become "heaps." He was honest, therefore, in his forecast of Babylon's conquest.

He pleaded for his life, which he said was in peril in the miserable place where he was confined. The king seemed to be touched by his resolute spirit, which longed for a greater freedom than was found in a stony cell beneath the earth, and he had him removed to the court of the guard adjoining the palace. There the prophet as often as he could coun-

seled submission, till the princes said, "He weakeneth the hands of the men of war," and insisted upon a closer confinement, and thereupon they lowered him into an unused well or cistern from which the water had been taken, but whose bottom was thick with mire into which the prisoner sank. There he would have died, had not the king's black slave, an Ethiopian, in pity secured from his royal master a countermanding order to release Jeremiah, who accordingly had ropes let down to him, and cloths to ease the cutting cords, while with a right good will he was drawn up and placed again in the easy confinement of the court of the guard near the king.

The siege meanwhile was pressed, and a relative came to him from Anathoth, desiring to sell to him some ancestral property in the village. Would the prophet be a buyer, when he had constantly prophesied the destruction of the city and the desolation of the land, while at that very time the besiegers with immense battering-rams were thundering against the walls, and when all over Anathoth doubtless were tramping the Babylonian soldiers? Was the cousin insane to ask Jeremiah to make a purchase under such circumstances? We recall the familiar story of the noble Roman who bought at its full price the very land on which

Hannibal's army lay encamped before Rome, in order to show his confidence in the ultimate liberty and continued prosperity of the Eternal City. Would Jeremiah buy the field at Anathoth? With faith in the future, however dark the present, he did make the purchase. He weighed out the money, paid it over, had the deed signed by witnesses, and he "sealed" the same. Did not we say that his signet would be seen again? He pressed the "seal," perhaps inscribed with his own name, upon the wax, and the bargain was completed, while he said, "Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land." Notice carefully again that signet upon Jeremiah's hand, for it may appear once more.

As to the dreadfulness of the siege that continued to be prosecuted we have ample evidence in Jeremiah's Lamentations, subsequently written, which tell us of delicate and refined women searching the dunghills for some morsel to eat, of the children crying in the streets for bread and receiving none, and of parents finally eating their own offspring in the rigors and horrors of the famine. At length, after eighteen months a breach was made on a July night, and the city was captured, 588 B. C. King Zedekiah and family and retinue with muffled faces stole away in

the darkness from the opposite side of the city, past the king's garden, where none stopped to pluck any flowers. But the royal fugitives were overtaken near Jericho, and the fallen monarch and other captives, including Jeremiah, were hurried away north in manacles toward a point where Nebuchadnezzar was also conducting the siege of Tyre. The prophet was liberated, but how was it with the king?

Jeremiah had predicted that he should see his conqueror face to face, and now it had come to pass—"Thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon." That is all plain, but not so clear and not so easy of fulfilment was Ezekiel's companion prophecy, which said, "I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there." How was Zedekiah to see the king of Babylon without also seeing his land? Before he was carried to the conqueror's capital he had his eyes speared into perpetual blindness, though not till he had looked upon the face of Nebuchadnezzar. The refinement of the cruelty appeared in the fact that Zedekiah's young sons (he himself being only thirty-two years old) were executed in his sight, and his last vision was thus of the innocent princes mercilessly despatched by the executioner's sword. Into

a hopeless captivity, where he is said to have worked in a mill like a slave, went the blinded monarch, while Jerusalem and the holy temple were leveled to the ground; and all because Jeremiah's counsels had not been followed.

The tragedy now hastens to its close. Over a miserable remnant that was left a governor was appointed with capital at Mizpah in full view of the fallen city, and though Nebuchadnezzar would have been glad to have honored our prophet in beautiful Babylon, Jeremiah, as Josephus says, "gladly clung to the ruins of his country." In a rocky grotto, and in "that fixed attitude of grief," immortalized by Michael Angelo, he is said to have poured out his dirges over the "city solitary" in what is known as our Biblical book of Lamentations.

There followed a happy autumn, when those who were permitted to dwell in the land "gathered wine and summer fruits very much," and it really seemed as if prosperity and happiness were returning, when the governor was assassinated, and, while the murder was avenged, the Jews who reestablished law and order were afraid of being punished by the Babylonian monarch for having permitted his government to be unsettled, and they started in their fright for Egypt. But before proceeding far they seem to have seen the inconsis-

tency of going straight to the country from which their fathers had been led out, and they consulted Jeremiah as to the right course to be pursued, and promised to heed whatever oracle he might receive from the Lord. He took the matter under prayerful consideration for ten days, and then announced his decision, that they should remain in their own country. But he had the same rebellious hearts to deal with as ever, and they had the effrontery to tell him that he had received no such message from the Lord, and they hastened on to Egypt, and forced the prophet to go along.

He kept thundering out his denunciations, and declaring that they should be followed even into Egypt by the king of Babylon. When they reached Tahpanhes he was divinely bidden to take "great stones" and to "hide them in mortar in the brickwork, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house," while he predicted that the king of Babylon "will set his throne upon these stones." There actually followed a Babylonian conquest of Egypt. Jeremiah had frequent contests with the Jews in their Egyptian surroundings, till at last they are said to have stoned him to death at Tahpanhes.

Now for the sequel. In 1886, Dr. Petrie, the archæologist, was excavating at this very

place of Biblical fame. "He soon discovered," says Amelia B. Edwards, the distinguished Egyptologist, "that he had to do with the calcined ruins of a structure which was both a fort and a palace." She adds that she accepts the evidence of "that burned and blackened pile" as to the undoubted fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy. And as to that "brickwork" before the palace, called also in the margin "the pavement (or square)," did the excavations reveal anything of that sort? We will listen to the excavator's own words as he uncovered the ruins in 1886: "This 'brickwork, or pavement' at the entry of Pharaoh's house has always been a puzzle to translators; but as soon as we began to uncover the plan of the palace, the exactness of the description was manifest; for here, outside the building adjoining the central tower, I found by repeated trenchings an area of continuous brickwork resting on sand, and measuring about one hundred feet by sixty feet, facing the entrance to the buildings at the east corner. . . . The platform is therefore, *unmistakably*, the brickwork, or pavement, which is 'at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes.'" As Miss Edwards says, "Here, therefore, the ceremony described by Jeremiah must have been per-

formed, and it was upon this spot that Nebuchadnezzar was to spread his royal pavilion." Those Egyptian ruins with their strangely preserved brickwork or pavement are to-day a living witness to the truth of what our prophet said nearly six hundred years before Christ.

There is one more thing not to be forgotten in this connection. Among recent Egyptian finds is a seal with Phœnician characters which, according to experts, manifestly antedate the Christian era by some half dozen centuries, and this seal has the inscription, "To THE PROSPERITY OF JEREMIAH," and scholars think it not unlikely to have been that of the great Hebrew prophet, who compared a Jewish king to a signet upon the right hand, and who pressed his own signet upon the wax when he "sealed" the bargain of the purchase at Anathoth. With that signet he really sealed the whole country of Palestine for the returning Jews, who did come out of the captivity to occupy again the Holy Land, and with that signet he sealed the same territory for the coming Messiah, who did in due time appear there. And so the prophet's life though seemingly fruitless had in it the germ of Christianity itself, which sprang from the restored Hebrews, for "salvation is of the Jews."

Jeremiah died after the passing of the kingdom whose downfall he had predicted, but the work of divine providence went forward, snatching victory from defeat, until ultimately there was the completest triumph. Said Savonarola, the great Italian reformer and patriot, shortly before he was burned at the stake in Florence on the square upon which multitudes have since stood as upon consecrated ground, "If you ask me in general as to the issue of this struggle, I reply, Victory. If you ask me in a particular sense, I reply, Death. For the Master who wields the hammer, when he has used it, throws it away. *So he did with Jeremiah, whom he caused to be stoned at the end of his ministry.* But Rome will not put out this fire, and if this be put out, God will light another, and indeed it is already lighted everywhere, only they perceive it not." We can see how eventually both their causes rose to success, and this should incite us in any great moral reform or religious movement to stand like "an iron pillar and brazen walls," in the confidence of glorious achievement in the future through Him whom we serve.

THE UNRECOGNIZED GIRDING OF CYRUS THE GREAT AND THE RETURN FROM THE CAPTIVITY

"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him. . . . I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me."—ISAIAH 45 : 1, 5.

IV

THE UNRECOGNIZED GIRDING OF CYRUS THE GREAT AND THE RETURN FROM THE CAPTIVITY

After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian conqueror, and after a captivity of seventy years (from the first deportation) in the land of exile, Cyrus comes to the front as the restorer of the chosen people to the Holy Land. In his own writings on clay he represents himself as an idolater. But God causes the wrath of man to praise him, and he seems thus to have used Cyrus, whom Scripture certainly makes to have been the human instrument for the accomplishing of the divine purpose, and who may have become, under his strangely providential leadings, a devout worshiper of Jehovah. Our sources of information relative to this king are principally Isaiah, Herodotus, Xenophon, and a cylinder of his own writing recently found. The inspired prophet, according to the traditional view, wrote about two hundred years before Cyrus, or, on the theory of a second Isaiah, long

enough before that monarch became really prominent to make the prophetic forecast a sagacious one born of insight from above. The two historians wrote from eighty to a hundred years after the royal personage concerning whom they treat had completed his brilliant career, while his own cuneiform inscriptions, though contemporary with himself, have been deciphered only since 1880. Though Xenophon may have meant his *Cyropædia* to be a historical romance, and though Herodotus may not have always given the exact facts, both these classic writers are believed to have narrated what was substantially true. They certainly relate what accords in a very remarkable manner with the predictions of Isaiah, who mentioned Cyrus by name, and who declared that this prince was unconsciously to have the divine guidance—"I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me."

Now the one thing which Cyrus was to do in the providence of God was to restore the Jews to Jerusalem, after they had been thoroughly cured of their idolatry by the captivity in Babylon. He was thus to prepare the way of the Lord. He was to make possible that condition of things out of which the Messiah was to spring. He was to be the means of establishing the Jewish state, which was to

produce the Saviour of the world. His life was to have a very particular reference to Christ and Christianity. It was that for which he was raised up. His life, as Horace Bushnell has expressed it in the title of a famous sermon, was to be a "plan of God." He was unconsciously girded for his great work, for that culminating and most glorious act of his whole life, the restoration of the Jews in order to the coming of the Lord.

He may have seen at last how he had been divinely led, and may have accepted the mission to which he evidently had been providentially appointed. Looking back over the past he may have seen how everything had been planned with reference to the final result. He was Cyrus the Great, because he did play into the hands of God, unconsciously at first, though perhaps consciously at last. All great characters have been, as they themselves have felt, men of destiny, that is, persons who have been used by an overruling providence. They come to believe that there is nothing fortuitous, but that all has been in accordance with the ordering of a Supreme Being. The immortal Grant closed his article on the Siege of Vicksburg in the *Century Magazine* with these words: "The campaign of Vicksburg was suggested and developed by circum-

stances; and it now looks as though Providence had directed its course, while the Army of Tennessee executed the decree." Let us see how this truth finds confirmation in one of whom we learn in Biblical and classical and archeological story.

First, as to the childhood of Cyrus. The divine girding of Moses in his infancy is familiar to all; his being hid in the flags of the Nile, his rescue by the Egyptian princess who went down to the river to bathe, and his committal to a nurse who proved to be his own mother,—all these circumstances are romantic enough, but not any more so than alleged events in the infancy of Cyrus. According to Herodotus the reigning monarch of Media had ominous dreams, one of which was that a vine proceeded from his daughter and overspread the whole land, and this was interpreted to mean the accession of her offspring to the supreme power. She had been purposely married to the ruler of obscure Persia to guard against any such contingency, for it was believed that no prince of that then insignificant country would ever aspire to the throne of proud Media. But the dream of the vine roused again the king's fears, and he gave orders for the destruction of his daughter's babe, sending an officer for the child. The

mother, supposing that a loving grandfather desired to see her little Cyrus, had him arrayed in the best attire of royalty. She put on him his most splendid robe, and fondly gave him over to the official who had called.

He, receiving the precious charge, had not the heart to take the innocent young life, and yet a failure to do so could only result in his own death at the hands of the tyrant whose imperious will was not to be resisted. Casting about for some relief from a personal commission of the crime, he sent into the mountains for a herdsman, to whom he gave over the little waif with the strictest command for its exposure in the forest till it died, when it should have decent burial and not be left for the wild beasts to devour. The peasant hurried to his humble home, where in his absence his wife had given birth to a child that had lived only a few hours. She was mourning the death of her little one, when her husband entered the hut with the royal babe in his beautiful dress. Learning the story she drew the young prince to her bosom as a very godsend, and pleaded for his life with tears.

She had a woman's ingenuity, as she proposed the substitution of the dead child for the living. The corpse was arrayed in the royal apparel, and the little prince in peasant's garb.

There followed the exposure in a dreary solitude, and after three days the death of the already dead was duly announced, and an officer of the court was summoned to witness the fact, and he testified that he had seen the child prince lying cold and still in his own beautiful dress, in which he was laid to rest for that sleep which knows no waking. The mother was wild with grief when she learned the supposed tragic end of her babe, and she heaped reproaches upon her father the king, till even he regretted the crime.

They were not aware that Cyrus was safe, having been girded by a strange providence. He was tenderly nurtured in the herdsman's family. Was he always to live in that obscurity? Nay, God had a work for him to do, and he must in some way be discovered. He was to be the emancipator of the Jewish captives, and the introducer of a new era whose crowning glory should be the advent of the Messiah in Palestine still five centuries and more in the future. How unlikely it seemed with his childhood spent in that cottage home!

Again, there was a providence which revealed his parentage. When about ten years old he was playing king and courtiers with some boys who had come out into the country from court circles. He was the king, and be-

cause one of those over whom he had been chosen to rule did not obey, he gave him a beating. The father, who was high in authority, complained to the king, into whose presence the offending peasant's son was ordered. He stood up and manfully defended himself. "What I have done," he said, undaunted, "I am able to justify. I did punish the boy, and I had a right to do so. I was king, and he was my subject, and he would not obey me." His lofty bearing led to some suspicion as to his origin and to a close questioning of the herdsman, who, being severely threatened, made known the whole story of the deception that had been practiced ten years before. The king was glad, and made an honest confession: "I bitterly repented of having given orders to destroy him," and he restored him, now a handsome boy, to the parents in Persia, whose joy was unbounded because of the lost who had been found, because of the dead who had come to life. If there was a providence in the infancy of Moses, there certainly was in that of Cyrus. God had girded him in childhood, though he knew it not.

In the second place, Cyrus had a training which was not without significance. So important was this, that Xenophon calls his narrative of the Persian hero the *Cyropædia*,

which means "the education of Cyrus,"—as if the education or training might be regarded the key to his useful and successful life. He was designed to be a wise and just and beneficent ruler. Was it chance that he was fitted in his youth for governing in so exceptionally good a manner as to be counted the model prince of antiquity? There was a providence in his having excellent instructors.

A well-known incident will illustrate this point. It was customary to let boys pass upon certain cases, and one day Cyrus was sitting as judge, to be rewarded if he decided right, and to be punished if he rendered a wrong decision. The case submitted to him was this, which has not been forgotten after the lapse of twenty-five hundred years: A larger boy had taken away the unnecessarily big coat of a smaller, and given him his own, which was really a better fit. The small boy, however, complained, and Cyrus was directed to judge in the matter, and he decided that each boy should keep the coat that fitted him. Of course it was an unjust decision, and the young prince was punished for not reasoning more soundly, and he doubtless remembered the salutary lesson. There was something providential in this training which he received. The hand of God was girding him, though he knew it not, for

the exalted position which he was afterward to occupy on a throne.

He was likewise providentially taught in his Persian home to shun the intoxicating cup. His sentiments came out on the occasion of a visit in early youth to his grandfather in Media. He took a special dislike for the cupbearer, whose duty it was to serve the wine to the king after first pouring some of it into his hand and tasting it himself, that his majesty might be assured it contained no poison. Cyrus asked to be cupbearer for once. He did everything to perfection, and received the applause of the courtiers present, who were much amused at his powers of mimicry, because, though but a child, he stepped so grandly, and looked so solemn, and handed the cup with such a flourish to his grandfather. The king expressed his satisfaction, but called attention to a single omission, the tasting of the wine first by the cupbearer. Cyrus gave his reason for not doing so—he was afraid it was poisoned. What could have led him to imagine any such thing? He explained: "It was poisoned the other day, when you made a feast for your friends on your birthday. I knew by the effects. . . . The things that you do not allow us boys to do, you did yourselves, for you were very rude and noisy. . . . You

could not even stand erect and steadily. . . . So I thought that the wine which produced these effects must have been poisoned." The young prince acknowledged that for these views he was indebted to his home training in Persia. He did not know that God had girded him in this respect. He had a great mission to accomplish, and without habits of sobriety he would have failed. Had he died in a drunken revel as early in life as Alexander the Great afterward did, he would not have been the means of restoring the Jews to the Holy Land and of establishing the conditions necessary for the coming of Christ and for the birth of Christianity.

But more important than all else in his education was his distinctively religious training. The Persians, among whom he was brought up, abhorred idolatry. "They have," says Herodotus, "no images of the gods, no temples, no altars, and consider the use of them a sign of folly." That is, they were monotheists. Cyrus himself, by coming in contact with polytheists everywhere in maturer life, seems to have adopted their ideas, and to have recognized numerous deities, and yet because of his early monotheistic training he was prepared to sympathize with the captive Hebrews who were believers in a single

Deity. And even though in manhood he had the polytheistic surroundings of Elam, his great-grandfather having reigned in monotheistic Persia, and one branch of the family continuing there, he naturally would not be averse to the worship of one God on the part of any thus disposed, even if he himself did, as his clay cylinder tells us, bow down before gods many, including the divinities of Babylon when he captured that city. He was unconsciously prepared to be tolerant of the Jews, who in their rejection of idolatry were not unlike his Persian ancestors. At any rate, this enlightened prince had come into our modern spirit of religious freedom, and he was very popular on that account. Surely, with his advanced ideas along this line, God had girded him, though he knew it not. All his training had broadened his mind, until his general policy was to grant freedom of worship to his subjects of whatever belief. Province after province was brought under his rule when he came to the throne, but he could say on his cylinder, "All of their peoples I gathered together and restored to their own dwelling-places." That beneficent policy made natural the restoration of the Hebrews to their native land, but there would never have been this crowning act of a right royal reign, had

there not been an overruling providence in the training of mind and heart. By the return from the captivity which Cyrus allowed he unconsciously prepared the environment whence came the religion of Christendom. He was divinely girded and guided.

Once more, God's girding of Cyrus appears, not only in the preservation of his life in childhood, and in the training which he had in his youth, but also in the accomplishments of his manhood.

The way he came to the throne was an intricate piece of providential working. The officer, to whom had been entrusted the certain destruction of Cyrus in childhood, was punished for disobeying orders by being invited to a feast at which the flesh of his own son was served as a delicacy by the inhuman monarch. Though finally glad that the child had not been destroyed, the king felt called upon to punish disobedience all the same. The officer smothered his indignation and grief, and bided his time for revenge. Long years after, when still others had experienced the tyranny of the king, he chose his opportunity. He secretly had a letter sent to Cyrus, who himself was elsewhere a ruler of people in a small way, that Media was ripe for a revolt and only awaited the coming of him

whom Providence evidently designed to lead in the movement. "It is plain, Cyrus," said the secret communication, "that you are a favorite of heaven." Cyrus came at the head of his forces, and, strange to say, by an infatuation from the gods, according to the belief of Herodotus, the king's army was put under the very officer who had been compelled to feast on his own son for not obeying orders in the matter of destroying the child prince. Of course this officer on meeting the troops who had come at his private solicitation led over to their side all the Medians he could; the king was dethroned, and Cyrus became his successor, and founder of a kingdom which led up to the Medo-Persian empire. Verily God does move in a mysterious way.

He often grants successes yet by overruling the wickedness of others for our good. Most men can point to things which enemies designed to work to their disadvantage, but which really inured to their benefit. A kind providence makes affliction even turn to our profit. There is wheel within wheel, and the machinery is frequently too complicated for us to understand. We can see no providence in some wicked act, which nevertheless may eventually redound to our advantage. The very wickedness of the Median monarch was

the means of seating Cyrus on his throne. But Cyrus knew not yet how he was girded by God.

Another great success of his life was gained, it would seem, by an accident, but actually by a little circumstance which must be regarded a providence. He had shut King Crœsus up in the city of Sardis, but how could a siege be made successful against one "rich as Crœsus"? This celebrated monarch had fabulous wealth, and his name is still a synonym for abounding riches. His resources were practically unlimited. He was strongly fortified, even by the natural rock at one point, which was supposed to be absolutely impregnable. Yet Cyrus was to succeed. He knew it not, and yet it had been predicted of him: "I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I am the Lord." The riches of Crœsus were to be his, and how was this to be consummated? How could the walls be scaled?

That was the question, till one day a soldier saw a sentinel leave his post and come climbing down the very rock which had been considered impossible of ascent, in order to get his helmet which he had accidentally dropped. The soldier watched the guard, and saw him safely return up the precipitous rock, and he

made known his discovery. By the rocky path thus revealed the city was taken, and Crœsus was made a prisoner and a subject. The sentinel accidentally dropped his helmet, and the soldier happened to see how it was recovered, but that "accidentally" and that "happened" were links in the chain of God's unbroken line of providences whereby the divine purpose was to be accomplished. God was girding Cyrus, though he knew it not.

> "There 's a divinity that shapes our ends,"

and there are no accidents and chances.

Scotland rightly reveres so insignificant a thing as the thistle, because at a crisis in the national history, when enemies were stealing upon the Scots unawares, one of the approaching foe, coming in contact with a sharp thistle, broke the silence that had been maintained, as he involuntarily uttered a note of pain, and the cry roused the garrison, and Scottish liberty and independence were saved. The religious mind of a grateful people recognizes that there was a providence in that thistle, which accordingly has been wrought into the nation's coat of arms.

You doubtless can recall little circumstances, mere chances, which have affected your destiny. You casually picked up a paper which

mentioned a good opening for business, and you went and settled there. Your future was determined by a hasty glance at a newspaper, or by a remark which you overheard. That is the way the world talks, but God says that he girded you, though you knew it not, in the hope that some day you might be led to recognize his hand and to live with reference to his kingdom.

The culminating part of the career of Cyrus was his conquest of Babylon. He had as yet no idea of his great mission, which was to restore the Jews to Palestine and to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. All he thought of was how to get possession of the golden city, and he did capture that, though not by the stratagem which Herodotus mentions of diverting the water of the Euphrates from its channel and utilizing the dry river-bed for the inflow of his soldiers. A successor of Cyrus may have gained entrance to the city by that historic and ingenious method, but he himself says that *he* by a decisive engagement some distance away settled the fate of Babylon, which he entered, says his clay document, "without clash or battle."

Then came the supreme moment in his life; for after celebrating his victory by publicly worshiping the Babylonian divinities he came

in contact with the Hebrew captives, and learning of the longings of their hearts he restored them to their native land. He had the statesmanship to see that it was wise to remove from the center of his realm any who might be disaffected and rebellious and a disturbing element poisoning other minds, and to convert them into friends by permitting them to build up their own institutions in loved Palestine, where also they would form a bulwark for his empire against a great rival power on the Nile. This liberal policy is what, according to his cylinder record, he universally pursued, and if he was actuated simply by what might be termed political sagacity he was all the more an unconscious instrument in the hands of God.

But there is reason to believe that at this stage of his career he came to an understanding of how he was being divinely used. Everywhere in Babylon he would see the Jewish exiles, who would be able to tell him that one of their prophets had foretold all he had done. If we may credit Josephus, he was induced to read Isaiah's prophecies, which mentioned him "by name" as the chosen instrument for Babylon's overthrow. He may have continued to read Isaiah to see what his further duty was. If he did, and the Jewish

historian says that he did, he found these explicit words regarding himself: "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." With startling force must the words of inspiration have come home to him, so personal did they seem, as for instance these: "He shall build my city, and he shall let my exiles go free." If Cyrus had this clear revelation at the last, he must have recognized the hand by which from the beginning he had been unconsciously girded. The Lord, he said according to Ezra, "hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem." He obeyed, too, the divine directions. He did restore the Jews to the Holy Land, as we learn directly from the sacred record and by implication from his own monumental document, and he did have Jerusalem and the temple rebuilt, in preparation, as we can see, for the coming of the Saviour.

He had been touched by the Hebrew lament so full of pathos:

"By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps."

That is what the psalmist said, and what do we read on the cylinder of Cyrus as to his attitude regarding such poor captives? His own language inscribed on the recovered monument of his own writing is: "Their sighing I quieted, I soothed their sorrow." The captivity therefore was ended, the exiles by the thousand returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, and Christianity was the ultimate outcome.

It only remains to notice briefly the closing of the eventful life which has been under consideration. According to Herodotus Cyrus met with a tragic death in a war against an Amazonian queen of northern barbarians. In her rage at the death of her son in the conflict, she had declared that she would give Cyrus his fill of blood, and she is said to have plunged his head, severed from the body, into a vessel of blood.

It has been felt by some that he perhaps deserved this fate for having departed from the Lord in prosecuting a war where he seems to have been the aggressor. Still, we are not acquainted with all the circumstances, and he may have been justified in doing as he did. A tragic death is not necessarily inconsistent with piety. The best Christians may be mangled to death in a railroad disaster. That

sweet singer, P. P. Bliss, of gospel hymn memory, thus came to his end, and the Lord who had girded him in life doubtless did in death, though he knew it not, being perhaps unconscious at the last.

But of Cyrus, the model prince according to classical writers, and the Lord's anointed according to the inspired prophet, and of "blessed deeds and upright heart" on monumental testimony, it is more pleasing to accept Xenophon's account of the end. According to this author, he died at a good old age, talking cheerfully to his friends and relatives, who had gathered at his bedside, about immortality, in words which Cicero long afterward quoted for their beauty and truth. "You cannot surely believe," he said, "that when I have ended this mortal life I shall cease to exist. Even in lifetime you have never *seen* my soul; you have only inferred its existence. And there are grounds for inferring the continuance of the soul after death." If such was his language at the dying hour, (and he may have thus finally died even on the battlefield after receiving a mortal wound), he was *consciously* girded by God at the last,

> "Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

WORLD EMPIRES

"The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast been able to reveal this secret."—DANIEL 2: 47.

V

WORLD EMPIRES

THE more the prophecies are studied, the more must one be impressed with the truth of the Bible and of Christianity. If only a single event came to pass as foretold, it might be called a coincidence, but the predictions which have been fulfilled are almost innumerable. A knowledge of Egypt furnishes a remarkable example of how prophecy and history accord. In the different fates of separate cities like Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre and Jerusalem, can be read what God has plainly declared beforehand. We cannot dwell upon such themes without having our faith strengthened. It has a happy effect upon our minds to be shown actual events which have been clearly predicted.

The disciples were constantly being most agreeably surprised on comparing what they saw with what had been written. They were pleased, when it first dawned upon them, that the triumphal entry of the Lord into the holy city as witnessed by themselves had been pre-

viously pictured most accurately by Zechariah. They were repeatedly struck with the literalness of what some old prophet had said as applied to some circumstance in the life of the Master. There is nothing like fulfilled prophecy to remove doubt. When the two disciples took that sad walk out to Emmaus, hope was almost gone. "We hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel," they said despondently to the unrecognized Christ who had drawn near to revive their drooping spirits and to reestablish their faith. And how did he proceed? It was as the prophecies "concerning himself" were unfolded, and were shown to be accomplished in what they had witnessed, that their hearts burned. A like effect is produced upon us, when once we see how predictions have become facts.

Our attention now is to be directed to just one prophecy and its fulfilment. Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision a colossal image, with head of gold, with breast and arms of silver, with stomach and thighs of brass, and with legs of iron terminating in feet which had an admixture of clay, while a stone cut out without hands smote the image upon the feet, and became a great mountain filling the earth. This was a representation of "what should come to pass hereafter." The same succession

of future events was pictured to Daniel by the rising of four beasts out of a tempestuous sea: a lion with eagle's wings, a bear raised up on one side and with three ribs in his mouth, a leopard with four wings and four heads, and a nameless animal "terrible and powerful," with iron teeth and ten horns, while a little horn of great strength and pretensions sprang up, crushing three of the ten and lording it over the rest, only to be destroyed itself by the Son of man, by the Ancient of days, who succeeded with a universal and everlasting dominion.

Daniel interpreted both these visions, or rather he learned their meaning after special prayer from God. With the divine illumination granted him he foretold great world empires which were to follow one another. The king was deeply impressed by what the prophet said, and was moved to say, "Of a truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast been able to reveal this secret." Under all the circumstances the intrinsic probability of the forecast, of the interpretation, forced conviction home upon the mind of the monarch. He seems to have had a glimpse of the truth afterward enunciated by Paul in Athens, that with regard to all nations God has "determined their appointed seasons, and

the bounds of their habitation." *We* must be still more profoundly impressed, when what was to Nebuchadnezzar a probable future is to us a certain past.

Though scholars are not agreed as to the empires that were foretold, let us look at the most common interpretation of the two visions contained in the second and seventh chapters of the prophecy of Daniel, the view that has been advocated by such ancient commentators as Jerome and Theodoret and by such modern interpreters as Hengstenberg and Pusey and Keil. Even if what has been the general outlining of what was predicted is not wholly correct, there will at least be seen what the actual unfolding of history was in the successive world empires whose culmination was what is increasingly proving to be the one universal kingdom of the earth. The agreement with Daniel's symbolism may also seem to be so exact as to make more than one of us adopt the language of the Rev. William M. Taylor, D. D., who long ministered with such distinction to the Broadway Tabernacle of New York. He said: "I have never had so deeply impressed upon me the truth of the divine origin of Holy Scripture as when I was studying these chapters." This was only reechoing the sentiment of the Oriental monarch, "Of a

truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast been able to reveal this secret." Let us see what the revelation in pictorial detail was, and what its remarkable verification has been.

First, there was the head of gold on the image, corresponding to the beast like a lion with eagle's wings from the mystic sea. The most resplendent of the precious metals, and the king of beasts and birds, well represented the Babylonian empire at the height of its prosperity six centuries before the Christian era. Its magnificent capital was called by another prophet "the golden city." Nebuchadnezzar had marched his victorious armies from the Euphrates clear to the Mediterranean, and he could congratulate himself on a dominion which included pretty much all of the civilized world. To this day unearthed bricks almost without number in recent excavations testify to the splendor of his reign. They especially witness to his greatness as a builder of palaces and temples. Had he desired to sink into obscurity, he could not have done so in view of what the pickaxe has brought forth. He might have said with Macbeth:

> "Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
> The very stones prate of my whereabout."

But the inscribed bricks have done exactly that, the stones have cried out, and their witness is that his kingdom was indeed, as Isaiah has said, "the lady of kingdoms," and "the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride."

Within his realm were the famous hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of antiquity. That artificial mountain, erected for a homesick queen who had come from a mountainous country, covered three and a half acres at its base, and rising with its verdure and flowers and trees above the lofty walls themselves, appeared to one approaching the city like a paradise suspended in mid air. This was only a sample of the magnificence of the capital which was called "the golden city," and which corresponded in the colossus of the vision to the head of gold. It required no particular insight in Daniel to interpret the first part of the two visions, for he was only relating what he saw, and what to us in this remote age is so evident from the inscriptions that were made with metal stylus in plastic clay which by being baked became imperishable. Lion and eagle in the animal kingdom, and gold in the mineral world, set forth the fact as to the preeminence of the Babylonian empire.

We come next to the breast and two arms of silver, and to the bear upraised on one side

and grasping in his teeth three ribs. This typified, according to the prophet, the rise of a kingdom. Did such an empire appear after the Babylonian? The Medo-Persian answers the description most accurately. The two nationalities constituting this great world-power are symbolized by the two arms of silver uniting in the breast of the image. The rising of the Persians above the once dominant Medes is shown in the bear's lifting himself up on one side in the act of getting to his feet. It is also a simple fact of history (explain it how we may), that this consolidated power seized as if with teeth the three kingdoms of Lydia, Babylon and Egypt; these were the ribs held in the savage animal's mouth. For two centuries flourished this political state, which has given us such illustrious names as those of Cyrus and Xerxes. Verily the God of Daniel was a revealer of secrets, or the prophet could not have foretold this historic monarchy, could not have portrayed with a few graphic touches the chief features of the kingdom which was to succeed the Babylonian.

After the Medo-Persian, we have the Macedo-Grecian supremacy. This was represented by thighs of *brass* in the image. Alexander the Great was the next to conquer

the world, with his soldiers who wore *brazen armor*. Then the symbolical leopard had four wings, and the rapidity of the resistless conqueror's marches is well known. Within twelve years, at the early age of thirty-two, he had made all his conquests. Did the animal again have four heads? So was Alexander's kingdom at his death divided between his four principal generals. Was the brass made into two thighs? So did his empire become reduced to two main kingdoms: Egypt under the Ptolemies, and Syria under the Seleucidæ. The leopard is small, but as it attacks the largest animals of the forest, so the distinguished Macedonian was small of stature, and he had an army of only thirty thousand, but with that he met and overcame the renowned Darius with five hundred thousand at his command.

Surely the prophet's God must have been God of gods, or he could not have known such secrets so definitely centuries before the events transpired. It is not strange that Porphyry in the third century of our era, in his opposition to Christianity, claimed that Daniel must have written subsequently to these kingdoms, or he could never have stated the facts with such exactness. *We* are compelled to deny the prophetic character of Daniel's

writings, and to pronounce them history, or we must acknowledge the divine inspiration of the Scriptures and the truth of the religion there taught. It was to the latter conclusion that Nebuchadnezzar arrived, and we have far greater reason to come to this decision. He had not yet seen what was predicted with so much confidence. Before our eyes have passed the successive monarchies indicated in the prophecy.

What was the fourth world empire? It was, as we know, the Roman, and there we have the legs of iron in the image, and perhaps the *two* legs in the Eastern and Western divisions of this political fabric; and we have the teeth of iron in the strange, composite animal. How mercilessly the legions of Rome did crush other nations, we are well aware. They were invincible, and there never was a stronger government than that which had its seat on the yellow Tiber. Still there were elements of weakness, indicated by the brittle clay in the feet. So many foreigners were taken into the body politic, that they were not assimilated; the iron and clay would not amalgamate. There was no cohesion, and there came dissolution; the Roman empire was broken into dishonored fragments; it was resolved into petty kingdoms; the animal

grew ten different horns. The barbarians of the north coming in were the cause of this disintegration, and singularly enough various writers have counted just ten kingdoms as succeeding to the fourth great empire, while others believe that such will yet be the number of nations into which Europe will eventually settle, if it has not already been in that precise condition.

There have been attempts to restore the old empire whose decline and fall Gibbon traced with such eloquence, but in vain. The Roman spirit has repeatedly sought the realization of universal dominion, but this centralizing tendency has been steadily resisted by the Germanic element, by the Teutonic love of personal liberty. Charlemagne and Napoleon with Roman ideas have been thwarted in their purpose by German individualism. The cohesive iron has not been able to hold the constantly separating clay.

Thus the prophet's delineation of the fourth empire was startlingly correct, not only as to the fact of such a kingdom, but also as to the picture of its strength and weakness. How did Daniel know all this so many hundreds of years beforehand? His must indeed have been the true God, the revealer of secrets, since he knew this secret.

More wonderful than all was the prophetic declaration of a coming kingdom, which "shall not be destroyed," an everlasting dominion including all peoples, nations and languages. This was prefigured by the stone cut out without hands, appearing suddenly, making havoc of the existing civic fabric, and gradually growing to be a great mountain filling all the earth. This meant that the Messiah was to come during the ascendency of the Romans, and was slowly to build up a kingdom of his own. This is what Daniel said six hundred years before the event, and how literally it came to pass! History tells us that in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, Christ was born, and for nineteen centuries we have seen the stone increasing into the great mountain.

The cutting out of the stone without hands indicates the supernatural origin of Christianity. The kingdom of Christ was not to come in the ordinary course of events. A new and heavenly power was to be introduced into the world. There was to be divine intervention.

Then this new force in society was to be comparatively feeble in its beginnings, a small stone at first. Compare the picture with the fact of the little band of twelve in the first century, and you see the peculiar propriety of the prophetic figure. The gradual growth of

the stone into a great mountain has been most wonderfully exemplified in the development of Christianity. The work which began so humbly in Jerusalem has widened by degrees, and it goes on widening with each age, and we may well believe that the stone which grinds to powder all opposition is finally to fill the whole earth.

The kingdom of the truth is the only one which shall never be destroyed. The Babylonian empire soon passed away, the Medo-Persian lasted only two centuries, the Grecian or Macedonian three, and the Roman at its best not much longer, but the Christian dispensation has continued for nearly two millenniums, and instead of being on the decline is stronger than ever. Each of the world empires to which the kingdom of God has been related, to the Babylonian by the Captivity, to the Medo-Persian by the return which Cyrus permitted, to the Macedonian by the providential spread of the Greek language, and to the Roman by the privileges afforded from a widely extended government,—each of these world empires after fulfilling its predicted mission has perished, while the kingdom of God is also verifying the word spoken of old by the Lord in a wider and wider extension.

Now does it not seem amazing that Daniel

should have so correctly portrayed the future, for such a sweep of centuries? His prophecy was not general, but specific. There were to be four world empires, and there were, such, too, as he said they would be; and in the course of the fourth there was to be begun a movement altogether unique, which has certainly had a most significant fulfilment in the history of the Christian religion. Well may *our* hearts burn, when we see Biblical predictions unfolding in historic facts, and the main reason why we sometimes become skeptical is because we do not "search the Scriptures," and inform ourselves upon the past. Let this knowledge be ours, and we will be confident of the complete triumph of the gospel at "the ends of the ages."

THE FULNESS OF TIME

"When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son."—GAL. 4 : 4.

VI

THE FULNESS OF TIME

A COMPREHENSIVE survey of the first century of our era will show that the time was then ripe for the advent of the Saviour. We are to consider this period, fittingly termed the fulness of time.

Certainly, so far as the outward was concerned, the time was very opportune in several respects. For one thing, the Roman empire stretched from the Atlantic on the west to the Euphrates on the east, and from the river Danube on the north to the African desert on the south. That means that the whole civilized world of that age was under one rule. It was as if America and all Europe were at present under the same government. Moreover, this mighty empire was at peace throughout its length and breadth. The temple of Janus, to express it classically, was closed. Tranquility everywhere prevailed, and there was no political excitement to monopolize the attention. Men's minds were not preoccupied, and a great moral and religious movement

could be started to advantage, while its extension would be facilitated by the free communication existing between the most remote points. To be sure, there was no traveling by rail, but there were magnificent roads connecting the most distant cities; roads that were built of large, closely-fitting blocks, making a pavement of great durability; and to-day at Rome can be seen the ruins of the famous Appian Way, constructed more than two thousand years ago. Besides these overland routes, there were ships plying between ports round the entire Mediterranean. Vessels bound for the eternal city brought precious metals from the mines of Spain, wild animals for the arena from Africa, corn from Egypt, wines from Greece, and silks and diamonds from the East. With this universal peace and freedom of communication, what better time could there have been for the appearance of a great Reformer!

Still further, one language was dominant throughout this wide domain, and that the Grecian. Cicero said that his grandfather thought there was altogether too much aping of the Greeks, but they steadily pushed toward the front intellectually. They carried their ideas and especially their tongue everywhere. They taught school as far away as Spain, and by and by their language became the fashion-

able one; and while the people in Italy talked Latin, and in Palestine Aramaic,—while each section of the empire had its vernacular, Greek was the medium of communication between all. It was as if the whole civilized world now should have a common language. That was an immense advantage which Christianity had in the first century. So far as the linguistic situation was concerned, Christ came in the nick of time, as we would say, and in the fulness of time, as Paul says.

Then the time seemed ripe for a Jewish movement particularly. The glory of the chosen people had passed away, and they were scattered everywhere, every important city containing a synagogue. Thus were furnished points of contact, centers at which Christianity, which was of Judaic origin (for salvation is of the Jews), could take root. Uhlhorn, in his "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," well says of the advantage arising from the Jewish dispersion, that the gospel thus found "channels everywhere cut, a network of canals extending over the whole Roman empire, and was able to diffuse itself rapidly in every direction." An American would stand little chance of moving the Germans as a nation, or the French, or the Italians, but let groups of Americans be located

in every considerable city of Germany, France and Italy, while all in those countries understood and could speak the English tongue, and the prospect would be infinitely better. There would be places to rest the lever, and with such a single vantage-point Archimedes declared that he could move the world. Exactly this condition of things existed at the coming of the Messiah. There were Messianic centers, not a few but many, wherever there were little settlements of Jews, who, as we learn from both sacred and profane sources, were in an expectant mood.

While these three leading nationalities of antiquity thus in a sense prepared the way of the Lord, being providentially used to that end, they themselves needed to be superseded. Upon each of them Christianity was an advance; it was upon Judaism, out of which it grew, from which it sprang with germinant force. This is saying a good deal, when we remember that the Jews were the most religious of all peoples. They were really nearest the kingdom. They were the ones chosen by God as the channel through which redemption should flow out to all mankind. Salvation *was* of the Jews. And yet they did not at all come up to their privileges. Their religious life had lost its vitality, and formality

prevailed. There had been no prophets for over four hundred years. Priests had taken their place, and religion had become largely ritualistic, a matter of ceremonies. The true God was known, but he was not worshiped in spirit and in truth.

It seems to be a tendency of human nature to drift away from earnestness of life to mere forms, to undergo a kind of spiritual petrifaction. The Christian Church itself has repeatedly run that course. From apostolic simplicity there was the departure which developed into the hierarchical system of medieval times. Then came the Reformation, which was a bursting away from this shell, and for a while there was great activity, genuine piety. Then Protestantism crystallized and became dead. The Church of England, for instance, became an ecclesiastical machine, which had to be broken by the Pilgrim and Puritan movement, and again by Wesleyanism all ablaze with zeal for souls. A pure Christianity has never been entirely lost. Like leaven it has kept working out from its hidden state. It has been the great purging and leavening principle of history. What the Reformation was to the Church of the Middle Ages, what Puritanism and Methodism were to the Anglican Church, the gospel was in a preeminent degree to

Judaism. It was a mighty new force in religion, a fresh outburst of spiritual life. It broke away from a narrow legalism shut up within itself, to preach glad tidings to a lost world. It began to seek and to save. It was the impartation of a quickened impulse and purpose to humanity.

Christianity was likewise an advance upon what Greece could furnish, though she did contribute a universal language for the conveyance of the truth. The Greeks were not an inferior race by any means. They had their excellences as well as defects. They knew how to extract enjoyment from this life. They lived in a country and climate which were very favorable in this respect. It was a land of sunshine and flowers and birds. Its shores were washed by the sea, whose wavelets went laughing up many a beach. It abounded in mountains and forests and streams. Under such circumstances the Grecians were of course great lovers of nature. They saw her in all her brightness and attractiveness, and in earth's beauties they found most of their felicity.

They had no pleasant anticipations of the future. They had no hope reaching like an anchor within the veil. They looked upon the hereafter as the abode of grim specters wandering here and there in the eternal shades.

They did not grow eloquent over exchanging earth for heaven. They did not say, as did Paul, "to die is gain." On the contrary, Achilles is represented by Homer as saying that he would rather be the veriest slave here than to be a king in the other world:

> "I would be
> A laborer on earth, and serve for hire
> Some man of mean estate, who makes scant cheer,
> Rather than reign o'er all who have gone down
> To death."

The Greeks, however, did not worry a great deal about what was to come. They lived for the present. They believed in making life a holiday. Not that their conceptions were coarse, for they were noted for their refinement. They were so refined that they worshiped only the beautiful. They saw deity in playing fountains and in all natural objects. They peopled the waters with lovely nymphs. They called the rainbow a goddess. They considered everything charming as divine. They were advocates of culture, of accomplishments, and therein they have never been surpassed. Their very groves were resorts of the literary, and literature flourished in the classic shades. They loved the theater, and produced such dramatists as Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. In art they are still the

world's teachers. They spared no pains, no expense, to produce the best that could come from the human brain, and if Sir Joshua Reynolds mixed his paints with brains, so did they. Their great sculptor, Phidias, is said to have been directed to use the most costly materials he could obtain for his statue of Athena, upon which the gold alone has been estimated at fifty thousand dollars.

This work was to have its resting-place in Athens, where taste was developed to the utmost, and where it would be commented upon by every one, for the Athenians, according to both Luke and Demosthenes, discussed every "new thing." This must have meant more than idle gossip with the cultivated Athenians, whose city abounded in statuary to such an extent as to have attracted the attention of even a Paul, who referred to the statue to the unknown god; a city also whose atmosphere was such that the apostle could not preach there without quoting Greek poetry. As another has said: "Probably every one of the free inhabitants of Athens was himself, if not an actual artist, an intelligent admirer, a skilled critic, an enthusiastic devotee, of art. He did not stand before a painting or a statue, gazing at it with the empty stare of most visitors of a modern gallery." The "new thing" talked

about in the Grecian capital would be the last poem written, the last piece of marble chiseled.

Such were the ancient Greeks, who, says an apostle, sought after wisdom. And yet they never once thought that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." They were not acquainted with the first rudiments of the gospel, which does not despise the beautiful, to be sure, which indeed calls our attention to the lilies of the field, but which, after all, emphasizes more the "beauty of the Lord" and the "beauty of holiness." They had no deep sense of sin, and the result was that with all their physical and intellectual graces they were morally corrupt, and their civilization did not endure because it lacked that great essential, exalted principle.

Again, Christianity was needed in comparison with anything that was given by the Romans of old. They originally were a magnificent race. They used to boast that for more than five hundred years no divorce was granted in their courts. There is a beautiful significance to the sacredness in which the Vestal virgins were held, those maidens of patrician rank, who, taking vows of chastity and consecration, kept the fire, which was the symbol of domestic integrity, ever burning in the temple.

But the most characteristic thing about the Romans was their adaptability for governing. They had some grand ideas about citizenship. It was a Roman contemporary of Paul, the philosopher Seneca, who said, "The world is my country." It was a Roman theater which rang with applause, when the now familiar line from Terence was first heard: "I am a man; nothing that affects man is indifferent to me." This idea of universal brotherhood, and especially of all being subject to law,—this idea of a cosmopolitan citizenship, and of government coextensive with the habitable globe, was more completely worked out by the Roman than by any other nationality. Virgil was correct in saying:

"Others, I know, more tenderly may beat the breathing brass,
And better from the marble block bring living looks to pass;
Others may better plead the cause, may compass heaven's face,
And mark it out, and tell the stars, their rising and their place:
But thou, O Roman, look to it the folks of earth to sway;
For this shall be thine handicraft, peace on the world to lay."

Roman authority was felt everywhere. It rescued Paul from lawless mobs, and saved his life more than once. A Roman citizen's appeal

unto Cæsar from any part of the wide realm was not in vain. The system of law was wonderful in its all-pervasiveness, and this is conceded to be the greatest legacy which Rome left to the world. It was her ambition to frame laws, to create the ideal government, and Roman jurisprudence has materially contributed to the making of our modern civilization. But there was one fatal defect. The binding force was to be power, just and impartial, perhaps, but imperial power, nevertheless, of the most absolute kind. Contrast this with Christianity, whose cohesive force was to be love. The gospel set to molding character, to gaining the heart, and that is why the kingdom of the truth outlasts Roman empire. Rome was the very incarnation of power, pure and simple, but the new kingdom had a different conception of power—the power of the gospel with its loving rather than iron sway. And it was in this respect that Napoleon once called attention to the superiority of Christ's kingdom to the empires founded by Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne and himself. With the successive failures of world empires resting on physical force, it was full time for the establishment of a different sort of kingdom, which should ever proclaim, "Put up thy sword," and "Love one another."

Above all, Christianity was needed in the first century because of the reign of downright barbarism. The cultivated Greeks and Romans called those barbarians whom we would term uncivilized; but *they* also were barbarians from the standpoint of the gospel. What was the inner state of society? What was the condition of things ethically? There were the most shocking immoralities.

Gluttony was fearfully prevalent. So much attention was paid to the appetite, that two hundred and fifty dollars were known to have been spent on a single fish. Cicero, in referring to a visit which Julius Cæsar made him at his country villa, mentions incidentally that the distinguished guest took an emetic after his dinner, in accordance with a custom of the age, that the enjoyment of food might be repeated. There was the greatest extravagance in connection with the olden feasting. The beautiful but corrupt Cleopatra, having wagered that a meal of hers would cost a fabulous sum named by her, is said to have drunk crushed pearls at her repast.

The treatment that slaves received in those days was horrible. Greek masters used to hire out the females for impure purposes. A Roman, for the offense of one, could legally take the lives of all his domestics. "The innocent,"

said a Roman senator openly in the council chamber, 59 A. D., "must perish with the guilty," as a terrible warning. Juvenal, in one of his satires, gives this picture of even a woman, who might be supposed to be less cruel than man:

> "Go, crucify that slave. For what offense?
> Who the accuser? Where the evidence?
> For when the life of man is in debate,
> No time can be too long, no care too great;
> Hear all, weigh all with caution, I advise —
> Thou sniveler! is a slave a man? she cries.
> He's innocent! be 't so:—'t is my command,
> My will; let that, sir, for a reason stand."

Think of the multitudes, probably two to one of the whole population, whose lives were at the absolute disposal of such imperious and heartless persons.

Woman was little better than a slave. She knew all too little of the sanctity of marriage. She was divorced for the most trivial causes. The celebrated Cicero put away his wife, with whom he had lived thirty years, to marry a young woman of wealth. Seneca, contemporary with Paul, speaks of "illustrious and noble" ladies, who reckoned time by the number of their husbands; and so a woman would say that a certain event occurred, not in the year of Rome, nor in the year of our Lord, but in the year that such and such a person was her

husband. Of course there was no true family relation under such a state of affairs.

Infants were destroyed by the wholesale both before and after birth. Plato and Aristotle, the best and most enlightened men of their age, considered child exposure proper, and even advocated the inhuman custom. Cato said that it was the "duty of a citizen to keep great wealth together, and therefore not to beget too many children." It was declared before the Roman Senate, that nearly every member of that august body had exposed to death one or more of his children, and the assertion was not disputed.

Courtesans were respectable members of society, and Socrates himself, whom some compare favorably with Christ, gave one of them advice as how best to prosecute her business, to win and keep "friends." There was the most brazen immodesty, Venus being personated after her own especial but nameless manner in the waves of the sea before assembled spectators. In the temples themselves, under the sacred name of worship, were done things of which, as Paul said, "it is a shame even to speak." Read the apostle's terrible arraignment of heathen vices, Greek and Roman, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, and then read the sickening details

given in Suetonius and Tacitus and other classical writers, and you will see that Paul did not draw a picture one whit darker than the facts warranted. It was dark enough to make us grateful for the transformation which Christianity has wrought.

Even the amusements of antiquity shock us of the present. Immense amphitheaters were built, holding fifty to two hundred and fifty thousand persons. The Coliseum would accommodate one hundred thousand. Into one of these vast structures, with gallery above gallery, crowds would pour to witness the gladiatorial shows. The brutal exhibition began with blasts of music. Then a procession of gladiators filed in, and at a given signal wild beasts were let in upon them, and as limb was torn from limb there was deafening applause from the cultivated spectators. Or the gladiators were set to slaughtering one another. One would be struck down. Was he dead? Hot irons were applied, and if there was a quiver of life, he was dragged out and despatched with the sword. The carnage continued. At intervals slaves ran in to spade up the ground, covered with blood, and to scatter about fresh sand. How the heart sinks on seeing in Rome that marvelous piece of sculpture, which has come down to us from

those dreadful days, "The Dying Gladiator," representing him who, as the poet has said, was "butchered to make a Roman holiday."

The emperor Augustus, in whose reign Christ was born, had ten thousand men killing one another for sport. In Trajan's games eleven thousand animals and ten thousand gladiators fought. Claudius had nineteen thousand mariners engaged in a sea-fight for his amusement, and the empress sat by his side to enjoy with him and others the bloody and ghastly scene. These were not mock but real battles, accompanied, says Tacitus, with "a great effusion of blood," and yet, says this same historian, to witness the spectacle, "the shores, the adjacent hills, and the tops of the mountains, were crowded with a countless multitude."

So low had humanity fallen that ladies attended these exhibitions, which, said the Latin poet Ovid, in the most nonchalant way, furnished rare opportunities for lovers. A young man and his fair one could whisper softly to each other between the scenes, he said, and then they would join in a wager as to which of the combatants would be butchered first, thus actually betting on the final result, as two human beings stood up to cut each other to pieces, or as considerable armies moved to each

other's destruction, not for patriotic ends, but to make a holiday. When it was customary for woman, even, to revel in such sights, the degradation must have been appalling.

What was still worse, the very children were provided with this kind of entertainment. Part of the program must be suited to their tastes, and accordingly there would appear a man on the platform, which was so constructed that at a certain moment it dropped apart and let him fall into a den of wild beasts which devoured him on the spot. How the boys and girls must have cheered at such a spectacle! Especially must they have applauded, when a person came into the arena, as one sometimes did, in glittering apparel, in a perfectly dazzling uniform, which by some hidden mechanism would suddenly burst into flames, and the poor victim would leap and writhe in agony till death came to his relief.

It surely was full time for Christ to come, and to introduce a different order of things. The whole creation was groaning for redemption, for divine intervention, and the Redeemer came just then, in the fulness of time, and there began a marvelous improvement, as there was instituted the movement which abolished slavery, which elevated woman, which glorified childhood, and which human-

ized manners and customs, till as contrasted with the first century this age is a heaven while that was a hell on earth. There has been a steady advance since the dawn of the dayspring from on high, since the Star of Bethlehem appeared in the midnight of the world's history, and we can say with Lord Macaulay: "Those who compare the age on which their lot has fallen with a golden age which exists only in their imagination may talk of degeneracy and decay: but no man who is correctly informed as to the past will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present." We do not realize the splendor of the times wherein we live, nor do we recognize, as we should, whence our blessings have come. The race would have gone out in darkness and death, had not the Sun of righteousness risen to be the light of the world and to impart new life. Christ appeared at the critical period and brought salvation. The birth of the Saviour was at the fulness of time.

A SKEPTICAL AGE

"And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him."—ACTS 17 : 18.

"Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?"—JOHN 18 : 38.

VII

A SKEPTICAL AGE

THE first century was a skeptical age. The types of skepticism were not essentially different from those of to-day. Such as at present proudly call themselves agnostics had their prototypes at Athens. Huxley adopted the name a few years ago to indicate what he supposed was a new school of philosophy, consisting of those who, according to the Greek derivation of the word, do *not know* about the claims of the Christian religion. The Latin equivalent is ignoramus, one who is ignorant or does not know, and that is an appellation in which one does not rejoice. Now even the modern agnostics, or ignoramuses, were duplicated in a school of philosophy discovered at Athens by the Apostle Paul. These were the Academicians, or followers of Plato, whose essential principle at that time was, that nothing was or could be known. Their sentiment was embodied in that famous inscription on an altar in the Grecian capital, "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD," and Huxley coined his new

word from the Greek for "unknown" in this very inscription. For this ignorance there was preached on Mars' Hill certitude.

The Stoics also were encountered. They did not believe in a personal God. According to their theory, matter and mind were identical, or rather different manifestations of the same indefinable substance. There was something above, which down here below was resolved into the material, but one was just as much God as the other. There was an endless cycle of things. Fate governed all, and the best thing for man to do was to fall in with what was eternally destined to occur and recur. It was as useless for an individual to resist the onward march of events as for a cogwheel to refuse to do its part in some vast machine. The universe was only a machine which kept turning, forever moving round, and so one had better continue revolving with it, if he would not be crushed. The soldier must either keep step or be trampled to death by the advancing columns. With these ideas, the Stoic did not propose to struggle against what could not be helped. The eternal order of things, rolling round and round, was resistless.

Said Marcus Aurelius, that excellent Roman emperor of the second century, "Whatever

happens and shall happen, has already been—it is merely the same show repeated." One, therefore, might as well bow to the inevitable. Even though that above from which is evolved what is here below, though that might be a little more refined than this material world, though it might be called God, it was a God having no sympathy, no interest in this life. It simply went on with its grinding. Hence Pliny the elder, who was a boy of seven summers when Christ died, said: "What God is—if in truth he be anything distinct from the world—it is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know. But it is a foolish delusion . . . to imagine that such an infinite spirit could concern himself with the petty affairs of men."

That was the feeling of the Stoics; everything went according to law, and they settled down to the conclusion of accepting the situation. They schooled themselves to apathy. Man was to do the best he could under the circumstances. He could get no help outside of himself; he must stand on his manhood. He must play his part well, and let the rest go. He had nothing to do with others. He should try to fill his own place, and that was enough. He was to be independent. If he felt that he could not sustain himself, if the

cosmos moved too fast for him, and crowded him, he could take himself out of the way, he could commit suicide. If the house smokes, said the laconic Epictetus of the first century, go out of it, that is, leave this earthly house. If you cannot stay in the world with credit to yourself, you can leave the world. Maintain your manhood at all hazards, if you have to kill yourself to do this.

The Stoic had no patience with a complaining spirit. He would take things as they came. There was no deity to help men; all were subject to fate; what had to be would be. In this cool, philosophical way the Stoic fortified himself for whatever might happen. He considered those who prayed to the gods as superstitious. He did not object, if they found comfort in it; indeed, he was rather inclined to think that for the ignorant, who could not rise to a philosophical view of things, religion answered a good purpose. Strabo, for instance, who died about six years before Christ, probably voiced a prevalent sentiment when he said: "The common people cannot be led to piety by the doctrines of philosophy; for this reason superstition also is necessary, which must call in the aid of myths and tales of wonder." The Stoic had only contempt for this notion of there being really gods, who are

interested in mankind. The only god in his creed was nature, force. It was a pantheistic theory. It had some fine maxims, bordering closely upon Christian precepts, but after all it was very defective.

There is opposition yet of this kind to the gospel of Christ. There are what are termed advanced thinkers, although they are only thinking the oldest of thoughts over again, and they look upon all religions as so many superstitions. They perhaps concede that the various faiths exercise a beneficial influence upon the general mind, but still there is no reality to these beliefs. People pray, and imagine they are answered. They talk about God noticing the very sparrow which falls to the ground, about his numbering the hairs of the head. That sort of thing, it is said, does well enough for sentiment, but the fact is, God (if there be one) has nothing whatever to do with the natural world; the universe is under law forever fixed.

How our modern Stoics delight to discourse upon force operating from all eternity! If any of them are at all inclined to admit a supreme Being back of all, they say with the elder Pliny that it is folly to suppose "such an infinite spirit could concern himself with the petty affairs of men." Besides, they do not

recognize any God (to use Pliny's expression) "distinct from the world." Natural force is all the deity there is. There is a good deal of this pantheistic sentiment abroad, and that, too, not only in India, where it holds sway over perhaps the greatest dialecticians of the world, but in a loose form it prevails everywhere, maintaining that nature is all the God there is; and so the teaching is now what it was two thousand years ago, "Live according to nature." That means, it is useless to fight against the established order of things. What is fated, must be; prayer will be unavailing. The thing to do is to take advantage of natural law, to build up exclusively from that standpoint, to ignore the supernatural, and to make the most of self.

This principle, acted upon, develops character hard and cold. It makes Stoics, men who may be sternly moral, but who are also proud and haughty. They feel that what they are they made themselves; there was no deity coming in with assistance. This spirit is at the farthest remove from that of the Christian, who says with Paul that by the grace of God he is what he is. It makes all the difference between pride and humility, as to whether one is a Stoic or Christian; and of the two theories of the universe, the one that there is noth-

ing but unintelligent force or fate, the other that there is a personal God who makes all things work together for good, the latter is certainly more comforting, and more in accordance with reason.

Christianity also encountered Epicureanism at Athens. This was a scheme of philosophy projected by Epicurus who lived three centuries before Christ, but it was presented in its most attractive form in the century immediately preceding the Christian era by Lucretius in one of the most wonderful poems of literature. This Roman poet adopted the atomic theory of the universe. He argued that there was no creative agency, but that the world was formed by the union of elemental particles which acted according to eternal laws. He, however, as well as Epicurus, only borrowed from Democritus, who four hundred years before Christ had used this language: "Everything is composed of atoms or infinitely small elements, each with a definite quality, form and movement, whose inevitable union and separation shape all different things and forms, laws and effects, and dissolve them again for new combinations. The gods themselves and the human mind originate from such atoms. There are no casualities; everything is necessary and determined by the nature of

the atoms, which have certain mutual affinities, attractions and repulsions."

Lucretius presents this theory in poetic form when he speaks of the "primordial seeds"

> " . . . ever changing, ever changed and vext
> From earliest time, through ever-during space,
> From ceaseless repercussion every mode
> Of motion, magnitude and shape essayed ;
> At length the unwieldy mass the form assumed
> Of things created."

That is to say, everything which exists is due to the shifting of atoms. Let them combine in one way, and a plant is the result; in another way, and a man comes forth. Even the mind, according to Democritus, is due to atomic formations. There is no self-existent Deity who creates and directs. If there is any God, even he is the production of these atoms. Matter alone is eternal. When the material particles of man separated and decomposed, that was the end. There was no future. The atoms entered into "new combinations."

Naturally, those who accepted such a materialistic view of the cosmos took as their motto, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The Epicureans, therefore, lived for pleasure. With the more high-minded, this pleasure was of a refined sort, but with the

masses it was sensual. That is always the tendency of materialism. It removes restraints. If there is no God, if death ends conscious existence, many will give free license to passion, with the purpose of enjoying life while it lasts.

The Epicurean school of philosophy has been reproduced in the scientific materialism of the present. The theory is, that the only difference between lifeless matter and living plants and animals is in the arrangement of the atoms. Put two gases, hydrogen and oxygen, together in certain proportions, and water is formed. So, whatever exists is the result of molecules rightly arranged. Here, for example, we have some material particles: arrange them in a certain way, and they make a plant; in another way, and they make an animal. The principle is carried even to mental phenomena. What causes thought? It arises from the disposition of the brain atoms. You express a certain sentiment: that is only because the molecules in your head are aggregated in a given manner. Change the position of those molecules, and there will be a different sentiment.

Huxley said: "The thoughts to which I am now giving utterance, and your thoughts regarding them, are the expression of molecu-

lar changes." Thus, if the molecules of the brain take one position, a man will pray; if the molecules shift round to another basis, he will swear; everything depends upon the molecular arrangement. A maiden blushes with modesty; there has been a stir among the brain atoms. Or she becomes brazen and immodest: it is only because of a molecular change. One disposition of the brain particles will produce poetry, another disposition of them will result in prose. A game of chance is continually being played in the brain, and hence you are not accountable for your thoughts, as a great exponent of Epicureanism has boldly maintained. There is in strictness no such thing as mind; this is only the production of matter. Everything is traced back to atoms. Life, intellect, spirit, all have a "physical basis."

So says our materialistic science, or rather philosophy, for it is not knowledge so much as speculation. God is practically ruled out of the universe, and people are urged to eat and drink, to play and dress, and to have a comfortable time in general. Of course, what would be enjoyment for one might not be for another, but the aim of all is pleasure of some sort, which is apt to be sensuous.

Possibly, atoms have accidentally arranged

themselves so as to produce the existing order of things, but it seems more reasonable to believe that God, a personal Intelligence, is back of all and potentially in all, on an evolutionary scheme that may be entirely theistic. Moreover, the practical working of the Biblical theory, though it be that of a divine evolution, is infinitely better than that of the purely atomic or materialistic theory; and that should be decisive as to which is superior. The one view makes men conscientious, the other makes them lax in their lives. In the one case you get Christians who are actuated by principle; in the other you get Epicureans whose impelling motive is pleasure. Christianity won the day over Epicureanism.

Not only were there these distinct schools of skepticism in the first century, but there was a general unbelief, voiced by Pilate, when he asked contemptuously, "What is truth?" With growth of knowledge, no wonder there was an unsettling of belief in view of what the religions of antiquity were. Take, for instance, the gods and goddesses of Homer, who were only prodigious men and women. Mars, wounded at Troy, falls sprawling over nearly two acres of ground, and a god's cry of pain was like the roaring of ten thousand men. The most anthropological no-

tion of the deities was entertained. They are represented as sitting on Olympus, convulsed with laughter, when one of their number from a lameness hobbles across the floor. We are familiar with Juno's sulking, so true to human nature. That is, the gods and goddesses were only abnormally developed men and women, with the faults of humanity magnified; and hence it was but natural that Julius Cæsar and the infamous Nero should be deified, as they actually were, being made objects of worship. It is not strange, therefore, that religion came to be held in contempt.

That was the inevitable result from the acquisition of a cosmopolitan knowledge. People did not live and die in the place of their birth; they did not stay in the country of their nativity. With the facilities of travel afforded by the Roman empire which was so widely extended they could and did go everywhere. And what did they see? Every nationality having its own worship. If they had always remained at home, they might have supposed there was only one religion, namely, that which they professed. Upon a larger acquaintance with the world, they found multitudinous religions, and the devotees of all seemed alike sincere. Such being the case, their faith would naturally be shaken that

they alone were right. As they became better informed on each cultus, as they studied into the various systems, they would become unsettled, and ask bitterly, What is the truth, anyway? They would get skeptical about all religions.

That exactly was what took place. Lucian, for instance, of the second century, was only reflecting a very common sentiment of the first, when he made one of his characters say that all is confusion. "Some worship one, and some another. The Scythians sacrifice to a scimitar; . . . the Assyrians to a dove; the Persians to fire; the Egyptians to water," and he ran on with numerous specifications, closing with, "How ridiculous . . . is such a variety!" That was the prevalent feeling.

The numberless gods were explained away. Some adopted the theory of Anaxagoras, that the so-called deities were only symbols of physical forces, and so they converted mythology, as Professor Fisher of Yale has said, "into a scheme of natural philosophy," while others resolved it into a system of "moral philosophy by identifying the deities with abstract ethical precepts." There was, for example, no such god as Vulcan: he was only another name for the physical force called fire;

there was no such goddess as Venus: she denoted simply the moral (or rather immoral) affection of love.

Others still accepted the view of Euhemerus, that the myths are historical persons and events, only exaggerated. Zeus was once a king of Crete, who in the lapse of time had been transformed by the popular estimation into a god; somewhat as we almost worship, it is sometimes said, Washington and Lincoln. Socrates alluded to this theory, when, as he and a friend were walking along the banks of a river, his companion remarked that they must be somewhere near the point at which the god Boreas bore off the maiden Orythia for a wife. Socrates was asked if he believed the tale, and he said that some gave this explanation: a damsel probably was beguiling herself upon the river bank, "when a northern gust carried her over the neighboring rocks; and this being the manner of her death, she was said to have been carried away by Boreas," whose name is only that for the north wind. Even the wolf, which was said to have suckled Romulus and Remus, the reputed founders of Rome, was made by the skeptical to be a woman by the name of Lupa, the Latin word for wolf. Thus, in various ways the gods were

being ruled out of existence, the supernatural was being eliminated.

In the Tuscalan Disputations of Cicero, there is represented a very characteristic dialogue. Different myths are referred to, that of the three-headed Cerberus in the shades below (that watch-dog of the mythological hell), and still others are mentioned, and one person says to another, that he probably dreaded those things; but the other replied that he was not so "imbecile" as that. The conversation continues after this fashion: "What! do you not believe them?" "Not in the least." "I am sorry to hear that." "Why, I beg?" "Because I could have been very eloquent in speaking against them." That is, he only regretted that his friend did not believe in the gods because it deprived him of the pleasant pastime of showing him that there were no such beings.

Now what could have caused this skeptical tendency? It was due to the wider knowledge which that generation had attained. As people traveled here and there through the then known world, they saw that each nation had its own myths. The different religions were evidently creations of different types of mind. What Xenophanes had said six hundred years before was true. He called attention to the

fact that the Africans made the images of their gods black and with flat noses, like the people themselves, and in general that every nation copied its own physical characteristics. He remarked further, that if beasts were to make representations of deities, they would have them like themselves: the horse would have a god of an equine type, the ox of the bovine and the lion of the leonine. This was a sentiment which the first century could endorse. As people came in contact with the various religions, and saw how manifestly they were the inventions of the separate nationalities, faith in any religion was destroyed, skepticism sprang up, and Pilate's question was general, "What is truth?" The Romans thought they had it, the Greeks imagined they had it, the Egyptians fancied they had it, the Persians supposed they had it, till by and by the conclusion was that none of them had it; there was no such thing as truth.

There is more or less of this feeling at present, and for a similar reason. This is an age of traveling. The world's population is flowing round and round this earth, like the fabled ocean of old. Separate nationalities, like rivers, are more and more merging into that great ocean whose only name is humanity. We are thus learning that there are many re-

ligions. We have our books on "The Ten Great Religions," and "The Faiths of the World." We see that the Hindus have their Brahma, the Chinese their Confucius, the Turks their Mahomet, and (shall we say it?) the Christians their Christ. There is a cosmopolitan knowledge of things, and we see how almost innumerable are the religions of mankind.

Every African tribe, even, flatters itself that it alone has the truth. The inhabitants of the dark continent have as much disdain for us as we have for them. Stanley and his companions were considered great curiosities, and as they stood in the center of a black group of natives, it was doubted whether they were really human. Stanley says that the women, with lower jaws dropped, in a posture of reflection, wondered if there could be men "'white all over' in this queer, queer world!" And the astonishment of the children, he says, "seemed to find its natural expression in hopping on one leg, thrusting their right thumbs into their mouths to repress the rising scream," amused beyond all measure. That is a most suggestive scene. We think ourselves superior to them, and they imagine themselves our superiors. In other words, every tribe, every nation, has its own methods of living, its own

principles of action, its own forms of worship. In these days, with the intercourse existing between all parts of the globe, we are familiarized with the idea of different religions, just as they were to a lesser extent in the first century, and it has a disturbing and unsettling effect. There are excellences in Brahminism, in Confucianism, in Mohammedanism, but where is *the* truth? In the multiplicity of faiths, what shall we believe? "What is truth?"

Pilate, however, had more reason for asking his question than we have. We can see as historical fact (and here is the great and unanswerable argument for Christianity as against all other religions) what to him was only prophecy, namely, that there is a kingdom not of this world, spiritual, running through all kingdoms, and, strangely, having subjects in all. There is a religion, not tribal, not national, but international and universal. It is not "the light of Asia," merely, but "the light of the world." It does not spring from any particular type of mind, it is not meant for any one portion of the race. It is born of heaven, and has world-wide adaptation. It is suited to Mongolian and Caucasian alike. It knows no sectional lines. It is a kingdom within kingdoms, and its subjects are neither

Jew nor Gentile. They are simply Christians, conforming, as the author of the ancient epistle to Diognetus says, to the usages of the country where they may happen to live "in respect to dress, food and other things pertaining to the outward life," and yet showing a "peculiarity of conduct wonderful and striking to all. They obey the existing laws, and conquer the laws by their own living."

Here surely is the truth, something which can mold character everywhere according to one grand, noble ideal, and yet not alter the great divisions of the globe by obliterating race distinctions that are immaterial. The European can be a Christian and remain a European, the Asiatic can be a Christian and remain an Asiatic, the African can be a Christian and remain an African, the American can be a Christian and remain an American; the Chinaman can continue to wear his cue, the Oriental his turban. The religion of the cross has nothing to say about the merely outward. It only asks what Socrates, according to the Phædrus, once prayed for: "Give me beauty in the inward soul." With this aim, to make humanity one in spirit, the gospel is being extended round the world.

No other religion aspires to such a dominion. There are other religions which are more or

less missionary in their efforts, which are to a certain extent aggressive, but they have no clear idea or settled purpose of circling the globe with their teaching and influence. Christianity, however, is working for precisely this, and has faith to believe that it will be successful in the end. The wonderful progress already made justifies this confident expectation. The most skeptical cannot help acknowledging that no other religion has shown such adaptability to "every kindred, every tribe, on this terrestrial ball."

Pilate in his day had seen no religion suitable for our common humanity. The Greeks had their gods, the Romans had theirs. What wonder, then, that he asked in bitterness of heart, "What is truth?" He could have sympathized with Diagoras, who more than four hundred years before had indicated his disgust by casting his image of the god Hercules "into the fire to cook a dish of lentils." If only the Roman governor could have appreciated what Christ predicted, that there was to be a kingdom of the truth, not confined to national limits but suitable for the race; if he could have seen this kingdom, as we actually do see it, literally compassing the world, he perhaps would not have spoken so contemptuously. He regarded the idea of a

world-wide religion chimerical, just as did Celsus, the noted opponent of Christianity in the second century. "If," said Celsus, "all to the uttermost ends of the earth" could be brought under one religious system, it might be well; but, he added, "any one who thinks this possible knows nothing."

In the light of history we can say that it is possible; for the gospel is making converts everywhere, and it always has been doing this, and it is this which should cure us of any latent skepticism. We are living in an age of cosmopolitan knowledge, we are learning that there are many religions in the world, and as we stand face to face with the multiplicity of beliefs, we are at first bewildered, and we cry out, "What is truth?" But a more comprehensive view of the situation removes uncertainty. We see that there is one religion, and that, Christianity, which is supplanting all others; which not only took an age that with all its culture and classical civilization was morally corrupt, and lifted it under favoring providential conditions toward purity and ethical wholesomeness, but which also took an age that was bewilderingly, and it might seem hopelessly, skeptical, and, meeting strongly the intellectual need, converted it to a gratifying extent by spiritual dynamics having the power

of God into an age of faith, and which has increasingly been doing this ever since. Silently it is doing its work, undermining old superstitions everywhere, appealing to no one type of character, but to humanity at large. Quiet and yet tremendous influences are going out here and there to the ends of the earth, and all tending to one result, the conversion of the world.

What is truth? Looking at the great historical movements, seeing country after country falling into line with Christian civilization, feeling the earth quiver under the tramp of the army of the Lord, with victory in the air and all signs pointing to the glorious consummation when the kingdoms of this world shall become his, we cannot doubt any longer.

THE APPEAL UNTO CÆSAR: CHRISTIANITY VICTORIOUS

"I appeal unto Cæsar."—ACTS 25 : 11.

VIII

THE APPEAL UNTO CÆSAR: CHRISTIANITY VICTORIOUS

ONE who has been in the unroofed palace of the Cæsars on the Palatine Hill in Rome, and possibly in the very room where Paul stood before Nero, cannot be otherwise than stirred by the apostle's historic "appeal unto Cæsar." The crumbling walls, the vast ruins, are deeply impressive. They speak of a past civilization, the most splendid known to antiquity, having gone down before a new force, namely, that represented in chapel, church and cathedral. They testify that the magnificent empire of the Cæsars has faded from the earth, and that in its place has risen the kingdom of the truth in the religion of Jesus Christ. One who on reading history has become confused as to the gospel being a divine reality, who has become befogged by the conflicts of the ages, need only to take his position amid those immense ruins overlooking the uncovered Roman Forum, and take a survey of the centuries with the mighty

changes that have occurred, to be reassured in belief and to be confirmed in faith. Christian Europe is a standing and unanswerable proof that the appeal unto Cæsar steadily made its impression and ultimately prevailed. Let us consider for a little and in broad outline how Cæsarism was overthrown, and how Christianity was established upon the "broken and dishonored fragments."

The infamous Nero was the Cæsar who at the time of Paul's appeal wore the imperial purple. There never was such a monster. Not to mention vices which cannot be properly described, he ordered the execution of a wife, the assassination of his mother, and by a brutal kick he killed a second wife. His was the first great persecution of the Christians. According to contemporary charges his own hand, or at least his appointed instruments, applied the torch to Rome, and for six days and seven nights there raged that conflagration, which was mightier than the now historic Chicago fire, which swept over the seven hills, and left but little of what had been a superb city. What Augustus before him, according to that emperor's own boast, had found brick and left marble, this to the extent of three-fourths of its area was converted by Nero's fire into a desolate ruin. And yet the imperial incen-

diary, as the flames leaped and roared, sat and talked, says Suetonius the Latin historian, of "the beautiful effects of the conflagration." What was too true is commemorated by a familiar saying of ours, that Nero fiddled while Rome burned.

It was to divert suspicion and indignation from himself as the cause of this great calamity, that he gave the Christians over to the popular fury. So we learn from Tacitus, who informs us that "a great multitude" thus perished. "Some," says this same Roman writer, "were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and exposed to the fury of dogs; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night." Says Juvenal, not improbably an eye-witness:

> "At the stake they shine,
> Who stand with throat transfixed and smoke and burn."

And Nero rode round in his chariot, enjoying the spectacle, his course illuminated with living fireworks.

Such was the Cæsar to whom Paul appealed, and though the apostle by a previous acquittal escaped this wholesale destruction of disciples, he was within four years arrested and re-

manded to Rome, to appear again before the emperor's tribunal. "What a contrast," Farrar well exclaims, "does the juxtaposition of two such characters suggest—the one the vilest and most wicked, the other the best and noblest of mankind!" The end every one knows; sentence of death was pronounced upon the great apostle, who was conducted to the place of execution, possibly to the site of the present St. Paul's Cathedral outside the city gates, and there, according to tradition, he was beheaded; not, however, till in prison, perhaps in the dark Mamertine that still exists,—till from some such dungeon he had given that triumphant dying testimony in the last letter he ever wrote, the second epistle to Timothy: "The time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness."

Later in the same summer Nero died, but how different the close of his life! "It is all over with me," he cried in despair toward the last; "I am beyond all example wretched." His very slumbers were disturbed. He dreamed that he was covered with swarms of loathsome ants, that he was drifting in a rudderless ship, that he was being dragged by his murdered wife Octavia into a "prodigiously dark place."

No wonder that he leaped from his bed in fright at midnight! It is not strange that he meditated suicide by poison and by drowning. On the authority of Suetonius, from whom we get these particulars, "he frequently affirmed that he was haunted by his mother's ghost," by the specter of her whose life he had wickedly taken.

Follow him to his miserable end, and you see him fleeing from his pursuers with muffled head, with bare feet, and in an old soiled cloak. You see him threading his way through bushes and brambles, creeping through a hole in a wall, and during all his pitiable flight from justice actually "weeping" like a child. You see him snatching up his daggers and nervously feeling their points; you hear his last words in reply to proffered help, "Too late;" you see him, with the assistance of a servant, driving a dagger into his own throat and expiring, to the great relief of an empire.

Was then the appeal unto Cæsar in vain? The life and death of apostle and emperor must have made their impression at the time, nor has the lesson for good of the striking comparison ceased. A similar appeal is still made. The contrast between the lives and deaths of the righteous and wicked must ever exert a powerful influence in favor of the

Christian religion. The superior morality of the Church to that of the world, the difference of the two modes of living as related to the dying hour, these are arguments for Christianity which never lose their weight.

But the Cæsar, to whom the appeal of the gospel was made, was not always a Nero. We have drawn a contrast between two representatives of the empire of the Cæsars and the kingdom of the truth in the first century, and let us next do the same with two leading spirits of the second century. We will take Marcus Aurelius, of whom a fine equestrian statue, that commanded the admiration of Michael Angelo, still stands on the Capitoline Hill. In a public square of Rome can also be seen an Aurelian column, on which there is a representation of soldiers catching rain in their helmets, possibly to commemorate that providential shower which is said to have refreshed the Roman army sufficiently to enable it to turn threatening defeat into a splendid triumph, and which is said to have come in answer to prayer by a legion composed of Christians, who no sooner sent their petitions up to heaven than the thunder began to roll and the lightning to flash, while the rains descended and brought refreshment and victory, and undying fame to those soldiers of the cross who

have ever since been known as the Thundering Legion.

We will take the emperor who is thus recalled, and compare him with Polycarp, the latter, it used to be supposed, having suffered martyrdom in the reign of the former. It is now thought that this tragedy occurred under his immediate predecessor, half a dozen years before Aurelius came to the throne, but as both these emperors persecuted the Christians, and as Marcus Aurelius is the more distinguished and the more excellent of the two, we will take him as the representative of the empire. His reign is included in the age of the Antonines, which Gibbon pronounces the golden age of the world's history; of all the different ages, the period, says this historian, "during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous."

There was much in the reign of Aurelius to justify this exaggerated statement. He was a moral philosopher, and his "Meditations" is one of the few books which are read through successive generations. Some of his precepts seem almost inspired, such as, "When you see others sin, reflect that you also sin in various ways," which reminds us of the Scriptural injunction to be compassionate to the erring, "lest thou also be tempted." He once re-

gretted the death of a prominent subject who had led a formidable revolt, because the untimely end of the traitor prevented the exercise of the imperial clemency, and he asked the Senate not to punish the adherents of the deceased. "Preserve," he said, "my reign unstained by senatorial blood." He certainly had a large charity of its kind, and especially since at his request the Roman Senate declared his wife, a woman of most unsavory reputation, to be a goddess. But as he had adopted the Stoic doctrine, "Live according to nature," he probably, like some modern teachers, regarded sin as only an amiable weakness or as a misfortune. His idea was that fate governed all, and such a theory does not leave much room for human responsibility.

Like liberalists of to-day, however, he had no sympathy for Christianity. The gospel appealed unto Cæsar in the person of Marcus Aurelius, and what reception was given by him to the Christian religion? He was enraged at what he called the "mere obstinacy" of the Christians, and he waged against them a most bitter persecution in Gaul or France, where the ashes of the martyrs were scattered upon the river Rhone with the cruel taunt, referring to their belief in a resurrection, "We will now see whether they will arise."

Now if Aurelius did not actually issue the death-warrant of Polycarp at Smyrna, it is only because his predecessor anticipated him by five or six years.

Let us glance for a little at the life and death of this saint. He had been a personal disciple of the apostle John, being about thirty years old when this last of the Twelve died not far from 100 A. D. He loved to recall his apostolic associations of the past. Irenæus, who had sat at his feet, writes subsequently of him as follows: "I can tell the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out, and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words."

But this bishop of Smyrna, who had talked so divinely, was not allowed to live in Gibbon's golden age of the Antonines. During some pagan festivals at Smyrna, a fierce persecution was inaugurated against the Christians, eleven of whom were thrown to the wild beasts, and the life of the godly and aged Polycarp was demanded. He fled into the country, and to a small cottage, where his

place of concealment was betrayed by a slave boy from whom the secret was wrested by torture. At his request, his persecutors were given refreshments, he himself at the time being at supper. He was allowed one hour for prayer, and so engaged did he become that two hours were passed in his devotions. He was then conducted a prisoner into the city, being met in the suburbs by the chief of police, who took him into his chariot, and tried to persuade him to recant, but who, failing in this, angrily thrust him out of the chariot, to be seriously lamed by the fall to the ground. He was compelled to walk the rest of the way notwithstanding his lameness. He was forced on to the stadium, of which the remains still exist, and at the appearance of his gray head a shout of satisfaction was raised.

He was asked to revile Christ, whereupon he returned the famous answer, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he hath done me no wrong. How then can I speak evil of my King who saved me?" And when he said plainly, "I am a Christian," there arose the cry, "Away with the father of Christians!" and he was doomed to the stake. Three days before, he had dreamed that his pillow was on fire, and on relating the dream had said, "I must be burned alive," and it was even so, but

amid the very flames he prayed and thanked God that he was permitted to give a martyr's testimony to the truth. There was victory in death itself.

How Marcus Aurelius died is not specifically related, but probably with that stoical resignation which surrendered, says Neander, "even personal existence to the annihilation demanded by the iron law of the universal whole." The emperor's own sentiments when in health were, "The soul, when it must depart from the body, should be ready to be extinguished, to be dispersed." In that cold and hopeless unbelief he met his fate in a military campaign on the frozen Danube.

Paul and Nero, Polycarp and Marcus Aurelius; the gospel in a measure went down before both these Cæsars, its appeal in one sense being unsuccessful. Open wickedness and proud morality both were steeled against the heavenly influence. The appeal unto Cæsar was not heeded, and yet, as in the time of the apostle, so in the time of the successor to the apostle, a salutary impression was being made, the adherents of the good cause were continually multiplying. The empire itself did not yet receive Christianity, but it was being prepared therefor. It could not always resist the argument of self-denying lives and triumphant

deaths in the Church as against the haughty self-sufficiency and the cheerless end of the Stoic.

Nor can our Cæsars now, our imperial moralists, present to the world such attractive lives and such peaceful deaths as our humble Christians can. Steadily the appeal unto Cæsar is having its effect. People do not altogether admire the charity of liberalists, who look upon evil as necessary, who excuse sin as misfortune, but who somehow like Marcus Aurelius are very bitter against Christians, whose holy lives and tranquil deaths are nevertheless manifest. It is being seen by all fair observers, that Christianity seeks and saves the lost, as morality (using that word in its technical sense) does not. It is being more and more generally recognized that the gospel ennobles life and transfigures death, as no theory of Stoics or fatalists or moralists does or can.

The years rolled on, the Roman empire dragged its slow length along, but never did Cæsar get away from the gospel's persistent appeal. A few prominent examples only are being selected to illustrate our theme. A striking picture might be drawn of Trajan and the Coliseum, in which Ignatius, said by a legend to have been the child taken in Christ's

arms on a memorable occasion, was devoured by the lions about 115 A. D. in that very amphitheater still existing in the massive ruins with which poet and painter have made us familiar. The spirit of the martyr might almost be imagined to be hovering "midst the chief relics of almighty Rome," midst the "broken arches," and midst the trees that wave "dark in the blue midnight."

The terrible facts of the Decian persecution, and of the Diocletian, might be related: the impaling alive, the roasting by slow fires, the thrusting of splinters under the nails into sensitive nerves, the pouring of molten lead down the throat, and all the other refinements of cruelty which make the heart grow sick. But there is not time for these horrible details, even if there were the inclination; a single emperor a century is enough. We have had Nero of the first and Marcus Aurelius of the second.

For the third century we will take Valerian, as exemplifying another phase of the truth we are considering. He was of noble birth. He rose in military life, becoming a successful general. He advanced till he reached the summit of human ambition, till he sat on the throne of the Cæsars. But there came reverses by which he fell, becoming a prisoner of war in the hands of a Persian monarch.

Bound with chains and arrayed in the imperial purple, he was exhibited, says Gibbon, "a constant spectacle of fallen greatness." The haughty Persian boasted of mounting his horse by placing a foot on the neck of a Roman emperor, who finally died of shame and grief, while, says the historian already quoted, his very "skin, stuffed with straw, and formed in the likeness of a human figure, was preserved for ages in the most celebrated temple of Persia." A most lamentable end, we say, of a glorious career, but Valerian is never thought of as a martyr; he died for no great principle. His was wholly a worldly policy. His motto was simply success. There was no moral power in his life, and his tragic end has nothing in it of the heroic and grand to stir the heart of posterity.

He might have been remembered for his virtues, and not for his checkered career, since the gospel appealed unto him for protection and adoption, but he chose rather to array the government of the Cæsars against the Christian religion. Africa felt the weight of his edicts of persecution. The old cry of the Punic wars was renewed, "Carthago delenda est,"—Carthage must be destroyed! Her bishop, the great Cyprian, was singled out as the leading offender.

He, too, like the emperor, had distinguished parentage. He was born to wealth, but he sold his estates, and devoted the proceeds to the cause of religion. He had brilliant talents, but he consecrated them all to the service of the Master. Exile did not silence him, for from his banishment he sent words of encouragement to his flock, and especially to those who had been condemned to labor in the mines. There, he wrote to them, "the body is refreshed not by beds and pillows, but by the comforts and joys of Christ." Valerian, however, was not to be foiled in his purpose of exterminating Christianity, and therefore he resorted to the sword. He soon had Cyprian in his power, and when his court pronounced the sentence of capital punishment, the good bishop broke out, "God be thanked!" Conducted to a wooded place outside of the city, Cyprian calmly laid aside his outer garments, directed his weeping friends to present the executioner, after the bloody deed had been done, with twenty-five pieces of gold; and then he kneeled in prayer, gave the signal for the fatal stroke by covering his face with his hands, and thereupon the head of a prince in the Church rolled in the dust.

Not long after this, Valerian came to his ig-

nominious end under the Persian king, but how different the emotions excited by the two deaths! The one had led a life of personal aggrandizement, the other a life of unselfish ministration to others, and the fate of the emperor is regarded as only a rather startling reversal of fortune, from the empire of the world to be a stepping-stone for an eastern monarch, while the martyrdom of the bishop speaks of devotion to a principle, of loyalty to the truth.

And this is what is still winning hearts; not earthly glory, for all history testifies to the uncertainty of that; but heavenly consecration, for that alone endures, lending a halo even to apparently untimely deaths. The throne of a Cæsar does not compare with kingship as bestowed by Christ; the one is temporary, the other is eternal. This was recognized by more and more in the empire, and it was only a question of time as to when the appeal unto Cæsar should meet with favor and prevail. Paul went down before Nero, Polycarp before the same power in the next century as represented at its best by Marcus Aurelius, and Cyprian went down before Valerian, but these were only different stages of the battle, which eventually was to terminate in victory for the Christian Church.

The fourth century witnessed the triumph in the conversion of the emperor Constantine the Great. You recollect how at a crisis in his life he saw, or thought he saw, a resplendent cross in the sky, with the inscription, "BY THIS CONQUER." And while much in his reign and in his personal career merits only condemnation, all that is glorious and commendable in either is associated with his acceptance of Christianity. The appeal unto Cæsar at last prevailed, and the Roman eagle on the imperial standard was displaced by the Cross of Calvary. Cæsarism went down before Christianity, and from that time the religion of Christ has been the predominating influence in giving shape to what is termed civilization, and the product has been Christian Europe. After three centuries of persecution came toleration and fostering care.

To be sure, under the lead of that cultured but misguided emperor, known as Julian the Apostate, there was an attempt to revive paganism, but the effort failed; the current of history, the course of Providence, could not be turned back. In the battle of the East where he met his fate, Julian may not have fallen, as has been asserted and also denied, with the cry, "Nazarene, thou hast conquered!" but this conquest was a fact. When at one time

this emperor seemed likely to succeed, his friend, the rhetorician Libanius, scornfully said to a Christian priest, "What is your carpenter's Son doing now?" and the undaunted reply was, "He is now making a coffin for your emperor." And it was even so; heathenism as a system of worship was forever buried by the rising and splendidly victorious Christian religion.

There was the immorality of those like Nero to contend with; there was the spiritual pride of philosophers like Marcus Aurelius forming another obstacle to the progress of the gospel; there was the dazzling glory which turned the heads of such as Valerian to act as a hindrance, but over all Christianity finally triumphed. The purer, the warmer, the more consecrated lives of a Paul, a Polycarp and a Cyprian, had their silent and increasing effect. Especially did the happy deaths of believers as contrasted with the mournful ends of unbelievers constitute an appeal which the Cæsars themselves could not forever withstand. The Constantines must yield and find their highest glory in the cross.

To the imperial soul of man, to the great empire of immortal spirits, the gospel still makes its appeal. The immoral, the spiritually

proud, and the desirous of vain glory, are asked to compare the lives and deaths of a Nero and a Paul, of a Marcus Aurelius and a Polycarp, of a Valerian and a Cyprian, and if they will fairly consider the appeal as made through the centuries, it will be extraordinary if they, too, do not, like Constantine, see the cross shining in the heavens from horizon to zenith. There is nothing like the cross for life or death. It transfigures both, and may its splendid appeal be heeded by souls of imperial dignity and matchless worth!

THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS

"And took the crescents."—JUDGES 8 : 21.

IX

THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS

THE crescent is a significant symbol. It speaks of a new moon that is increasing to the full. We even have the crescendo in music to indicate a constantly increasing volume of voice, or the swell of a mighty organ to its full power. The Turkish empire, the chief exponent of Mohammedanism at present, has therefore adopted for its standard that which reminds of growing strength and beauty. But the Turks found the crescent already associated with Constantinople, when they made this city the capital of their wide dominion. As far back as 340 B. C., during a siege of the city by Philip of Macedon, the crescent figures in a story of the city's deliverance. The guards one dark night by a bright rim of lunar light were enabled to see the approach of the besiegers and to drive them back. In commemoration of this event, we are informed, coins were struck with the imprint of a crescent, and this beautiful circle of light was thus closely identified with the history of Constantinople

from the earliest times. The Turks, upon capturing the city and making it the seat of their empire, would find what they had previously adopted as their striking emblem to be doubly significant.

It seems almost a pity that Christians could not have appropriated this luminous sign for their widening realm. Indeed, in the ages of Christian chivalry, of military and religious orders of noble knights, there was one order whose badge was a crescent of gold, with the inscription in red letters, PRAISE TO THAT WHICH INCREASES. And yet this cheering symbol has by force of unfortunate circumstances become largely associated with that which is evil. The enemies of Israel in the days of Gideon had the crescent wrought on the trappings of their camels. The daughters of Zion were once condemned by Isaiah for becoming haughty, and for adopting heathenish customs: they "walk," said the prophet, "with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet." Among the flashy articles worn by them are mentioned pendants, and bracelets, and ankle chains, and nose jewels, "and the crescents," or, as the old version has it, "round tires like the moon." Among the proud trophies of war taken by Mohammed

were jeweled crescents, and the crescent has become a synonym in history for the Mohammedan religion. We take for our theme, The Crescent and the Cross. In broad outline we will trace the victories of the Saracens; for God's people, instead of taking the crescents, were long taken thereby.

First, the life and career of Mohammed will for a little occupy our attention. He was born at Mecca in Arabia, probably 572 A. D., and being left an orphan at six he was brought up by a merchant uncle, whose traveling salesman and camel driver he became. At twenty-five he became the commercial agent of a wealthy and noble widow, Kadijah. He had keen eyes, an expressive face, a pleasing address, and a fine mind. He won the heart of her whom he served, and he became her husband, though he was fifteen years younger than she was. Placed in easy circumstances by his marriage, he led a life of religious contemplation, spending months in meditating in a cave not far away.

For fifteen years he dreamed his dreams. He was subject to epilepsy, which produced extraordinary mental states. He had ecstasies and visions, which we would call hallucinations, and which he himself at first thought to be the workings of evil spirits, but which his wife de-

clared to be divine revelations, and she persuaded him into this belief. At the age of forty, while he was alone in his cave he had a crowning vision, wherein he imagined that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and gave him his great commission, whose watchword was to be, "There is one God, and Mohammed is his prophet." He went forth preaching the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, and future rewards and punishments. He put an interdict upon wine, he made Friday a Sabbath, and he enjoined a month of fasting for each year. Through thirteen years of opposition he worked out his system in detail, borrowing from the Old Testament and the New, acknowledging Moses and Christ to be prophets, but making himself to be the one whose coming both these foretold. He added visionary ideas of his own to the Scriptural ideas which he borrowed and perverted. The result was the Koran, which, however, was not published till two years after his death, to be known ever after as the Mohammedan Bible.

His first convert was his wife, and that he appreciated her devotion is evident from what he subsequently said, when he had more than a dozen wives, and when a favorite of these asked him if she was not better than his early

love, whose memory, now that she was dead, he tenderly cherished. He replied that no one equaled her, adding, "She believed in me when no one else did. In the whole world I had but one friend, and she was that friend." His converts did not multiply as he had hoped. He was jeered at, and was told to attest his prophetic claims by working a miracle—by producing, for instance, a garden in a desert. He refused to perform any miraculous signs on the ground of not wanting to decrease the merit of faith by making it too easy to believe. While he did not claim to work miracles, his followers, after his decease, did not hesitate to strengthen his position by citing alleged supernatural confirmations of his mission. One of the wonders related was that the moon once circled round him seven times, and then, contracting in size, our satellite "entered at the collar, and issued forth through the sleeve, of his shirt." The prophet himself expressly disclaimed the use of the miraculous. He simply proclaimed what he deemed to be the truth in its native strength.

For thirteen years he endeavored thus to gain adherents, but with small success, and amid a growing opposition, till his enemies matured a plot to put an end to his life. Learning of their intention, he fled from

Mecca. He was pursued, but he found a hiding-place in a cave, which his pursuers did not enter, because a spider had woven its web across the mouth of the cavern, and it was therefore believed that he could not have been within. Had it not been for that silken door to the cave, entrance thereto would have been made, Mohammed would have been slain, and, as Gibbon has said, the lance of an Arab would have changed the history of the world. On such small contingencies do great events and movements depend.

After a proper interval the prophet emerged from his retreat so providentially guarded. He continued his flight to Medina, where he received a royal welcome, and his fortunes began to rise, his crescent began to grow. This eventful flight is accordingly the familiar Hegira from which Mohammedan time is reckoned, the year 1 of the prophet corresponding to our 622 A. D. With the accession of power in his new and more favorable surroundings came a change of policy. For persuasion was substituted the sword, and while Jews and Christians were to be given their choice of the Koran, or tribute, or death, all others were to be exterminated. The faithful, who should die in the war of conquest to be relentlessly waged, were promised a paradise where would

flow crystal and perfumed streams, where would be given golden garments flashing with diamonds and other precious stones, and where particularly for the delectation of all true Moslems would be black-eyed girls whose youthful charms would never fade. These last pleasures were not to be denied the faithful even in this life, for polygamy became a leading doctrine of Mohammed, and he practised what he taught by taking to himself several wives.

When such were the alluring inducements and prospects, naturally the Arabs flocked to the standard of the prophet, who with ten thousand of them went back to Mecca, and made it forever his. He rapidly extended his dominion, till all Arabia was at his feet, piously kissing the famous Black Stone, which was supposed to have come down from heaven, which may have been of meteoric origin, and which to this day lies built into the wall of the smaller temple over which the magnificent Mosque of Mecca stands. In Arabia itself the Mohammedan movement is by many recognized to have been desirable, in that idols were dethroned from the historic Kaaba, or central temple, and the worship of one God was inaugurated, while at the same time there was secured the political union of hitherto wander-

ing and separated and mutually warring tribes. Their tents were as shifting as the sands of the desert which was so largely their home. The language of Longfellow,

> "Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
> And as silently steal away,"

well indicates the nomadic nature of the people whom Mohammed cemented into a great and strong nation.

So successful was the prophet in this that he next began to plan for universal empire, and as even Christendom had practically become worshipers of idols in multitudinous images of the saints, his purpose to destroy idolatry widened in its scope. He was arranging for a campaign against the Eastern or Greek empire, and when his followers demurred to the taking of the long and weary march in the heat of summer, he retorted in those celebrated words, "Hell is much hotter." But he did not live to see his ambitious scheme take shape. His health became enfeebled, and he gradually sank, till in the year 632 A. D. at the age of sixty-three he died, with his head in the lap of his youngest and favorite wife, and he was buried at Medina under the first mosque that was built for the rising faith of absolute submission to the

divine will. Such was the remarkable man who flung the crescent to the breeze for universal empire.

We turn next to the marvelous development of Mohammed's power under his successors. We can only take a quick survey of whole centuries. Westward the course of Mohammedan empire took its way over Egypt, on to Carthage, which was destroyed in a way that would have satisfied those ancient Romans, whose senate hall used to echo with the cry for its demolition. Clear through northern Africa swept the followers of the crescent, blotting out four hundred seats of Christian bishoprics, and so effectually that the very memory of Christianity perished for ages in a country where stately cathedrals long flourished. Cyrene, which furnished the Saviour's cross-bearer, and which received converts from Pentecost, was overwhelmed by the Arabian conquerors, and when their proud leader was stopped by the Atlantic ocean, he spurred his chafing steed into the salt waves, and exclaimed, "Great God, if my course were not stopped by this sea, I would go on to the unknown kingdoms of the West, preaching the unity of thy holy name, and putting to the sword the rebellious nations who worship any other gods than thee."

The tumultuous host was checked only to turn northward. The victorious troops looked across the narrow strait separating them from Spain at the Pillars of Hercules; they went over, and Gibraltar, named thus from their commander, commemorates the triumphant passage. They conquered all Spain, they poured over the Pyrenees into France, and they were moving on for the conquest of all Europe and for the obliteration of Christianity, when in the vicinity of Tours there met the hitherto invincible Arabs, 732 A. D., the sturdy Franks under Charles Martel, that is, Charles the Hammer, who dealt his heavy blows, till three hundred thousand of the enemy lay dead on the field. This was one of the decisive and epochal battles in the world's history, for it saved Christian Europe from extinction under the hoofs of the fiery chargers that had borne their riders from distant Arabia.

The Saracens were forced back into Spain, but there they stayed for more than seven centuries. In the Moors they rose to great power, and the splendor of their reign is still sung by poets and chanted by historians. Charlemagne crowded them still farther back toward Africa, but not till the time of Ferdinand, on the eve of the discovery of America by Columbus, who sailed forth under the au-

spices of this monarch and of queen Isabella, —not till so late a date were the Moors expelled from Spanish soil, as they made their last stand at Granada, where rose the celebrated Alhambra, a palace and a fortress that is yet beautiful even in its ruins. The keys of this were yielded up to Ferdinand and Isabella, a massive silver cross was borne triumphantly into the Moorish capital, and thus, as a poet has said,

> "Down from the Alhambra's minarets
> Were all the crescents flung."

But eastward also the star of Saracen empire went,—over Persia, on to India, over Palestine, and in Jerusalem where had stood the Jewish temple, Omar, successor of the prophet, erected a mosque which still bears his name. At Bagdad the caliphs rivaled the splendor reached by the Moors in Spain, and especially at the close of the eighth century under Haroun, or Aaron the Just, who is the fascinating hero of the "Arabian Nights," that wonderful book which is the delight of children. Under him the arts and sciences flourished, and there was an Asiatic magnificence simply regal. It was this caliph, who, upon receiving from the emperor at Constantinople a challenge to war in a sheaf of swords,

literally hewed the whole bundle to pieces with his exquisitely tempered Damascus Blade without so much as turning its edge, and who exacted of the Christian monarch on the Bosporus a heavy tribute.

That imperial city by the Golden Horn had eventually to succumb to the Mohammedans. It repelled the attacks of the seventh and eighth centuries with its terrible Greek fire, whose composition it long kept a secret. With this mysterious combustible, which belched forth consuming flames that were not extinguished but rather quickened by water, Constantinople for a while was safe from the Saracens, but the day of subjugation came. Where the caliphs had ruled the Turks set up their dominion, and while they gained political supremacy, they were religiously conquered by the faith of the Moslems, and their banner, shining with the crescent, carried Mohammedanism wherever they went. Under Mohammed the Second, the Turks laid siege to Constantinople in 1453. The besieged, notwithstanding one immense gun, which threw to the distance of a mile a stone ball of six hundred pounds, but which could be fired only a few times in a day,—notwithstanding this and other engines of war the besieged defended themselves valiantly, and in their

direst straits they were encouraged on beholding far out to sea the white sails of five ships coming to their relief with provisions. The Turkish boats pushed out to meet the little fleet, they rode the water in crescent shape, but they were scattered by Greek fire and cannon shot, and hope sprang again into the fainting hearts of the Christians. The Turks, however, pressed the siege, until Constantinople was taken, and the Ottoman empire was established on the ruins of the Eastern or Greek; and St. Sophia, where had been Christian worship ever since the days of Justinian, and in the original cathedral ever since the time of Constantine in the fourth century, became a Mohammedan mosque, and it remains such to the present. But the baneful power of the Turk has for a considerable time been dwindling, and we may well rejoice at the downfall of the iniquitous system, with its degradation of woman, with its moral grossness, with its political despotism, with its deification of power rather than of holiness, and with its exaltation of divine sovereignty to the destruction of free will and to the production of fatalism.

Still the Mohammedans of all kinds yet hold wide sway. They number nearly two hundred millions around the whole earth. A mis-

sionary among them has used this graphic language: "When the morning sun rises from the Pacific Ocean eager eyes are straining from the minarets of China to catch the first beams of that sun; and . . . the song goes up, 'There is no God but God'; and that song is caught up and carried from minaret to minaret, across the whole breadth of China. It resounds in the valleys of the Himalayas; its echo is heard all over the plains of India. It sounds out in the islands of the Indian Ocean. It is caught up, and echoed back across Persia, far along from peak to peak. . . . It is carried down into the great Arabian peninsula, and then it is taken up in the valley of the Nile. It is carried to the head waters of the Nile, the great lake region, and it sweeps across the Soudan and the Sahara, and not till the sun has set in the Atlantic are its last echoes overcome by the roar of the surf of that western sea." We are reminded of Daniel Webster's historic characterization of the English power, which, he said, "has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat, following the sun and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England." Mohammedan-

ism religiously, no less than England politically, has had a wide extension.

Christianity, however, is the dominant religion of the world to-day. The great civilized nations, which are steadily extending their sway, are Christian and not Saracen, and one-half the Moslem population of the globe is under the rule of governments that exalt Christ. When the framers of our national constitution had finished their work, and were affixing their names to the immortal document, Benjamin Franklin pointed to a painting which represented the sun at the horizon, and said he had often wondered, "in the vicissitudes of hope and fear," as to the issue of their labor, whether the sun in the picture was rising or setting, but now that they had completed their great charter of human liberty, he was happy to know that it was a rising and not a setting sun. The Mohammedan crescent is no longer waxing but it is waning, as every student of history can now see. The cross is rising above the crescent at the very center of Mohammedan power, and the former shall yet supplant the latter in Constantinople itself, where the Turk governs at all only by European sufferance.

There is an ancient legend which says that the apostle Andrew, on his arrival in Con-

stantinople, with his hand pressed the form of a cross into the rock. This at least pictures a truth. Christianity long centuries ago made its impression there. The Roman emperor, who gave the city the name it still bears, the immortal Constantine, from the time he thought he saw the cross emblazoned on the sky, had the eagle on his standard displaced by this glorious symbol of salvation. In three centuries the crimson banner of the gospel floated in triumph from the walls of the capital of the Roman empire; Christianity was everywhere dominant throughout the vast realm of the Cæsars. But there was to come in the providence of God another contest. The Christian religion conquered cultured Greece and Rome, and subsequently the barbarians of the north, and it is now slowly but surely conquering its most formidable foe in Mohammedanism. The crescent is steadily going down before the cross, and by and by

> "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
> Does his successive journeys run;
> His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
> Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

Though there be times of darkness, like the period of the atrocious massacre of the Armenians, a tragedy before which all Christian

Europe, notwithstanding her superior power, seemed helpless,—at every such trying crisis we can say with the poet:

"Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

THE CRUSADERS

"Nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father."—JOHN 4: 21.

X

THE CRUSADERS

MANY are the pilgrims who have journeyed to Jerusalem. There they have experienced what Milman in his "History of Latin Christianity" has called a "blameless at least, if not beneficial excitement," in that "the presence, the being of the Redeemer, is more intensely felt." Therein we have an explanation of the crusades, of what has been termed "the heroic age of Christianity," when for nearly two centuries, the twelfth and thirteenth, all Europe was agitated over the recovery of the sepulcher of the Lord from infidels, from believers in the Koran. So important an epoch in the history of the Christian Church is not unworthy of some consideration. Whether with Hume we speak of the crusades "as the most signal and most durable monument of human folly that has ever yet appeared in any age or nation," or whether with the more broad-minded Guizot we say, "The crusades marked the date of the arrest of Islamism, and powerfully contributed to the decisive preponderance of Christian civilization"—in either

view of the matter the striking movement is deserving of study.

It was a combination of good and evil, of religious enthusiasm and worldly ambition, and though Gibbon refers contemptuously to the anxious concern for "a tombstone two thousand miles" away, he yet recognizes that with the desire of "military glory" there was united "the purest piety." Christ himself, had he been on the earth, would have condemned the repeated attempts of the crusaders to rescue the holy city from its Mohammedan conquerors, but he would have approved the glorying in the cross, which was so marked a feature in the great enterprise. There never was more splendid devotion to a cause than was found in those who rallied around the cross as against the crescent; and there never was a more prodigious mistake made than when it was supposed that Jerusalem and Calvary must be the political possession of Christendom.

And now, without reciting all the horrible atrocities practised even by Christian armies; without dwelling upon the inevitable concomitants of cruel war, especially in barbarous times when the humane sentiments of to-day did not exist; without relating the dreadful massacres of Jews, the roasting alive of infidel spies, the slaughtering sometimes of the

enemy's innocents, even to babes a year old, the cutting open of prisoners for the gold which they may have swallowed for safe keeping; —omitting these common details of ancient warfare everywhere, let us proceed to gather the great central and glowing facts.

For centuries there had been pilgrimages to the Holy Land, not only of peasants but of princes, and especially from the time of the emperor Constantine the Great, whose mother, Helena, went to Jerusalem about 325 A. D., and found, she claimed, not only the sepulcher but the true cross, while she erected on the place of the discovery a church which still remains in part. Three hundred years after this, the cross being captured by a Persian invader, but being retaken by the Greek emperor Heraclius, he carried it, 629 A. D., on his own shoulders to the top of Calvary amid great demonstrations of joy. Such were the wondrous tales told far and wide, and interest was naturally stimulated to go to the land of miracles, where Christ had lived and died, and where there would be many reminders of his earthly career. Even when the Mohammedans by conquest came into possession of Palestine in the seventh century, the pilgrimages did not cease. They seemed rather to increase, thousands taking the long journey, separately

and in companies. The under-garment, which the devout pilgrim wore on first setting foot in Jerusalem, was superstitiously laid aside for a winding-sheet wherein to be buried.

But while the Mohammedan rule for a long while did not seriously interfere with this European stream of pious visitors, in the eleventh century there was a change. Christian pilgrims began to be maltreated. Some of them were not privileged to return home. Many of them did go back to the various countries of Europe, but only to carry the news of shocking cruelties which they had suffered from the infidels. Soon the whole continent of Europe was a slumbering fire, which had only to be fanned by some leader to break out into a perfect blaze of excitement and indignation.

A French pilgrim, by the name of Peter the Hermit, was destined to start the mighty conflagration. His impetuous nature resented the indignities which he saw and experienced at Jerusalem. "I will rouse the martial nations of Europe," he exclaimed, and he was true to his word. He was of insignificant personal appearance, but he had an eye which flashed fire, and a soul which was vehemence itself. On his way home he stopped and inspired Pope Urban II with his own thought and

purpose, and receiving the papal benediction he went forth on his mission, with bare head and feet. He traversed the country, speaking at crossroads. He entered cities, and declaimed in market-places and cathedrals. From Italy he crossed the Alps, and inflamed his native France. He had crowds to listen to his fiery eloquence. He wielded a tremendous influence. The very hairs which fell from the mule he rode were treasured as relics. In 1095 a council was called in Italy, and nearly thirty-five thousand responded; so many that the meeting had to be held in the open air.

Later in the same year, there was a still larger assembly in France, and the Pope himself was there, and made a thrilling address. Again and again he was interrupted with the shout, "God wills it! God wills it!" and this was adopted as the battle-cry. A cross of cloth or silk was the badge of enlistment in the holy cause. The crusade was now vigorously preached from every pulpit, and in 1096 three separate companies, aggregating more than one hundred thousand persons from France and Germany were on the march, Peter the Hermit leading the largest division. They were motley throngs of men, women and children, the bones of most of whom whitened the plains that were traversed, only

a small portion of the one hundred thousand reaching Constantinople even. And when the Greek emperor Alexius had the remnant rabble shipped off across the Bosporus, they were there practically annihilated, a pyramid of bones marking the spot of their overwhelming defeat. Two hundred thousand more of the lower classes followed, and likewise perished on the way.

Then regularly organized armies set forth, by different routes and under leaders of distinguished birth and rank, of whom Godfrey will ever be held in grateful remembrance for his fine qualities. Five hundred thousand foot and one hundred thousand horse are said to have passed through Constantinople this time, to the consternation of the Greek emperor, who, though he had sent to the west for help against the Mohammedans, now began to be afraid of such hosts of warriors being poured through his capital, which had so much to attract ambitious generals. But the six hundred thousand moved on into Asia, which Alexander the Great had conquered with not many above thirty thousand. They captured the city of Nice. With the shout, "God wills it!" they advanced to other victories.

There were the usual accompaniments of a long march. For one thing they suffered from

thirst, till their dogs by wet paws and coats told them of a stream somewhere near by, of which they eagerly drank till three hundred of them died from excessive draughts of the refreshing water. There were perilous adventures. Godfrey, the favorite leader, went to the rescue of a pilgrim engaged in a desperate fight with a bear, which turned upon the chieftain, who was thrown from his rearing horse, and who plunged his sword to the hilt into the beast's heart only after being almost torn to pieces, receiving wounds which nearly proved fatal.

But these were comparatively trifling incidents. Antioch was reached, and after a long siege was taken. The pilgrims were in turn besieged by the enemy, who had been reinforced. The horrors of famine ensued. The crusaders were in despair, till from under the altar of a church was dug a spearhead, which to one in a vision had been proclaimed to be the holy lance that pierced the Saviour's side. Around this precious relic they rallied, they sallied forth with new courage, and chanting the Sixty-eighth Psalm, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered," they marched into battle, and after a stubborn contest they triumphed.

But they had not yet reached the goal of

their great enterprise. Before they reached Jerusalem, fifty thousand were swept off by an epidemic in a single month, and when they came in sight of the holy city, only forty thousand of the six hundred thousand were left. But those who had been spared to behold Jerusalem were more than repaid. Their mingled emotions of sadness and gladness have been well described by Tasso in his celebrated "Jerusalem Delivered." The passage in prose has been translated as follows: "With stifled sobs, with sighs and tears, the pent-up yearnings of a people in joy and at the same time in sorrow sent shivering through the air a murmur like that which is heard in leafy forests what time the wind blows through the leaves."

Soon in slow procession they were marching round "the city of God," singing psalms as they went, and halting from time to time at points of blessed association. There followed a siege, and at length, July 14, 1099, at three o'clock on Friday afternoon, the day and hour of the crucifixion, Jerusalem was in possession of the pilgrims, who did not long delay to go barefooted and bareheaded to the Holy Sepulcher. Says Tasso of the leader,

> "He reached the temple; there, supremely bless'd,
> Hung up his arms, his banner'd spoils display'd,
> And at the sacred Tomb his vow'd devotions paid."

Thus sang the Italian poet of the noble Godfrey, so noble that when elected king he refused the title for a more modest one, saying with a commendable humility, "I will not wear a crown of gold in the place where the Saviour of the world was crowned with thorns."

And so did Europe accomplish its purpose, that its inhabitants should be free to worship in the holy city. The first crusade (not counting the Hermit's mobs) was successful, but not till nearly a million of people had lost their lives. It was a holy war waged by soldiers of the cross in direct violation of the command of the Captain of our salvation, who expressly directed the sword to be put up, and who, as if to guard against this very thing of an undue veneration for the Holy Land, had declared, "Nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father."

Six more crusades followed at intervals through nearly two centuries, as the changing condition of affairs in Palestine seemed to demand. "Europe was," as another has said, "an agitated sea, throwing wave after wave upon Syrian shores." The fall of Edessa in 1145 occasioned the next crusade, of which Bernard was the great preacher. "Call to mind," he said, "the example of your fathers, who con-

quered Jerusalem, and whose names are written in heaven!" His auditors, after listening to his fervid exhortations at a great gathering, rushed forward with the cry, "The cross! the cross!" Enough sacred badges had not been provided for all who volunteered for the crusade. Bernard tore up his robe to make crosses. There were crusaders who had the cross inserted by indelible ink under the skin, and others had it burned into their flesh, being literally branded therewith.

We can hardly conceive of the enthusiasm which prevailed. The French king and the German emperor, Louis the Seventh and Conrad the Third, were induced to enlist, while soldiers by the hundred thousand flocked to their standards. To such an extent was Europe's male population poured forth, that Bernard could speak proudly of places where there "was hardly one man to seven women." But nothing in particular was gained by this second crusade. The vast armies, of over a million, it is estimated, melted away like snow before getting as far south as Palestine.

In 1187 Jerusalem fell into the hands of the great Saladin, great, and yet at the dying hour showing his estimate of human greatness by displaying a shroud for a flag. Again was

Europe in a ferment of excitement, and an English king this time joined his forces with those of the monarchs of France and Germany. The three greatest sovereigns of Christendom led hundreds of thousands on the third crusade. It is needless to speak of the German emperor's death from a fever caught in a chilling stream before he reached the Holy Land; Frederick Barbarossa never saw Jerusalem. It is needless to speak of the French and English kings quarreling on the very borders of Palestine, till Philip Augustus returned in disgust to France. It is needless to speak of the marvelous reputation as a warrior of Richard the Lion-hearted, by whose name Saracen mothers long frightened their children into obedience, while, if a horse suddenly started out of the road, the rider would say, "Dost thou think that King Richard is in that bush?" But even the valiant Richard had to retire, leaving Saladin master of Jerusalem, gaining only restricted privileges of worship in the holy city, and then setting out for England, to be shipwrecked before he got there, and to be kept a prisoner in Austria for weary weeks and months. Verily this crusade ended ingloriously.

The fourth crusade was to start from Venice, which had risen to great commercial impor-

tance, and which agreed to furnish the necessary ships to transport the army for a specified sum of money. When at the time of departure part of the stipulated price was lacking, those merchants of Venice, unlike Shakespeare's generous merchant of Venice, and more like this dramatist's Shylock, insisted upon having exactly what was named in the bond. As this could not be furnished, the crusaders were at the mercy of their creditors, whose bidding they had to do. In gallant ships, 1203 A. D., they sailed down the Adriatic, only, however, to be diverted from Jerusalem, first to the conquest of an island which Venice wanted subjugated, and secondly to be led to Constantinople, and so never to reach Jerusalem.

The fifth crusade, that of the excommunicated Frederick the Second of Germany in 1229, was a little more successful, as he managed in spite of papal opposition to enter the holy city, and with his own hands to put the crown upon his head. But he soon returned to the more congenial occupation of governing his own people at home.

The sixth and seventh crusades in 1248 and 1270 were the last, and they had less admixture of selfish ambition, and more of real religious design, than any of the rest, perhaps,

and yet they were failures so far as their main object was concerned.

The prime mover of both these was Louis the Ninth of France, who is more of a saint than many whom Catholicism has canonized. His career touches our sympathies more than all else in the crusades, except the sad fate of several thousand children who in their pilgrimage were shipwrecked or sold into slavery. Aside from the thousands of children who caught the crusading spirit and met with a tragic end, there is no one who so enlists our warm interest as Saint Louis.

In his youth at the point of death, when one of the attendants was about to draw "the sheet over his face," the supposed corpse moved, rallied, and as soon as he could speak asked to have placed upon his shoulder "the cross of the voyage over the sea." He had resolved, if he recovered, to be a crusader. His advisers afterward endeavored to dissuade him from his resolution, made, they intimated, at a moment of weakness. He listened attentively to their pleas, and then, with deep emotion undoing the cross from his shoulder, he handed it back amid congratulations all around, when unexpectedly he said, "My friends, now, assuredly, I lack not sense and reason; I am neither weak nor wandering of mind; and I

demand my cross back again." He parted from his mother, who with a burst of affection said, "Most sweet, fair son. . . . I shall never see you more." With a small but "picked army" of forty thousand he entered on the voyage over the Mediterranean, and landed in Egypt, where he was defeated, and where he refused to avail himself of an opportunity personally to escape, thereby leaving his faithful followers in the power of the enemy. He remained with them to be taken a prisoner, till a ransom released them all. He sailed directly to the Holy Land, where he lingered till he heard of the death of his mother. Throwing up his arms he exclaimed pathetically, "I have lost my mother!" and then he took ship for his native land and for his kingdom, and the sixth crusade was closed.

He ruled his people wisely and well for sixteen years, when, in 1270, to their great sorrow he departed once more to rescue Jerusalem and the Sepulcher from profane masters. He went by way of Tunis, northern Africa, where he hoped to convert a Mohammedan king, who was reported to be favorably disposed toward Christianity. He arrived, but was prostrated with the African fever. He grew worse, he was manifestly nearing his end, he gave part-

ing instructions to all, including a weeping daughter standing at the foot of his bed. He fixed his dying gaze upon the cross with a rapturous expression, he partly rose and said ecstatically, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! we will go up to Jerusalem!" He sank back—dead, gone not to the earthly but to the heavenly Jerusalem.

From his death, after a brief and vain attempt of Edward the First of England to carry out the plan of Saint Louis, and after more than two million lives in all had been sacrificed, there were, after the seventh, no more crusades.

The seven efforts had failed, or the eight and nine had, if the differentiation of other authorities is adopted, for historians do not agree in their numbering. Naturally there is this variation, for waves following one another in close succession cannot be sharply separated. But they all, whether counted as seven or eight or nine, were a failure.

After two centuries of misdirected effort the Church finally learned the lesson, "Nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father."

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? The crusades with all their folly and tragedy yet tended, as the best writers claim, to the furtherance of civilization. If they did not

roll back the tide of Mohammedanism, they at least, says the highest historic authority, marked the "date of the arrest of Islamism," and perhaps checked its farther extension into Europe. They freed Christians from provincialism, broadened their minds, as traveling always does, though of the pilgrimage order, and they unified Christendom. They aroused noble enthusiasms, and developed heroic qualities of character. They especially contributed very powerfully to the breaking down of feudalism, which had divided Europe into a multitude of petty sovereignties.

The continent had been covered with little feudal dependencies, each of which consisted of a chieftain in his castle on some fortified hill, with as many retainers as he could force to follow his fortunes. After the crusading movement, stirring whole populations, had caused the free intermingling of alien peoples, the feudal steadily gave way to the federative, and this was an advance like that which marks the development of the tribal into the national. The great Christian States of the present time were thus gradually evolved. We can therefore adopt Guizot's summary: "On the whole, when we survey the state of society at the end of the crusades, we find that the movement tending to dissolution and dis-

persion, the movement of universal localization (if I may be allowed to use such an expression), had ceased, and had been succeeded by a movement in the contrary direction, a movement of centralization."

THE YOUNG CRUSADERS

"Our feet are standing
Within thy gates, O Jerusalem."—Ps. 122 : 2.

XI

THE YOUNG CRUSADERS

WHAT multitudes have visited Jerusalem and the Holy Land during the different ages! The most marvelous movement in this direction was that of the successive crusades from the close of the eleventh century to the end of the thirteenth. All Europe rallied again and again to rescue the sepulcher of the Lord from Mohammedan infidels, who had come into possession by right of conquest, and who subjected Christian pilgrims to all manner of indignities. Army after army, led in turn by peasants and nobles and kings, was hurled against the Saracen power. For two hundred years wave after wave of great popular uprisings rolled on and broke upon the shores of the promised land, until two millions of Europe's population are said to have perished. We are at this time to consider a mere eddy in the mighty tide, whose breakers, rapidly following one another, were so sensibly felt along the whole coast of Palestine.

There were Children's Crusades, that were

part of a movement which we have seen to have been providential. These have been scarcely noticed by many historians. Gibbon, Guizot, Milman, Neander, either pass them over in entire silence, or dismiss them with a line of mention, or with a brief foot-note. There is one writer, Gray, who has made a special study of the ancient chronicles, and who has wrought out an entire volume, giving the wondrous story in detail, and to this book we are indebted for the fascinating facts connected with the lives of the young crusaders who seven hundred years ago were anxious to be able to say with the Psalmist:

> "Our feet are standing
> Within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

In a beautiful valley of France, watered by a small river, was born, about the year 1200, a boy named Stephen. He tended the flocks of his father who was a peasant. When he was about twelve years old he went to a neighboring city to witness a religious procession, gotten up to rouse a fresh interest in the Holy Land; for four of the seven great crusades had occurred without accomplishing the desired deliverance for Jerusalem. Pathetic addresses were made, plaintive hymns were chanted, solemn prayers were offered, and

crosses were draped in black. A deep impression was made upon the boy Stephen who all his childhood had heard the touching tales of returning pilgrims. Alone with the sheep in country solitude, he dwelt upon the theme until his imagination kindled and he had his boyish day-dreams of valiant deeds against the Mohammedans who wrongfully possessed the holy city.

While in this excited mental condition, there appeared to him one day a disguised priest, who claimed to have just come from Palestine, and who talked with him at length, representing himself to be the Saviour, and straightway commissioned Stephen to preach a crusade to children, with the assurance that the young should succeed where armies and kings had failed. The lad, after this revelation, rushed from the field to tell his parents of his interview with the Lord. He could not be reasoned out of his delusion in that credulous age, and he started on his mission. "For the last time we have heard of defeat," he said, enthusiastically, in his appeals for volunteers; "hereafter shall children show mailed warriors and proud barons how invincible are youths when God leads them!"

He repaired to a great national shrine five miles north of Paris, where crowds were con-

stantly arriving and departing in honor of a saint who was said to be able to cure various distempers of body, mind and soul. It was a good base of operations, and as Stephen was precocious and eloquent, a genuine "boy orator," he had a wonderful influence over parents and children, over the young especially, who were eager to go with so grand a leader for the rescue of the sepulcher from unholy hands. Children's bands at once began forming all over France. Boys of ten and even eight years canvassed their respective neighborhoods. They urged companions to enlist, and regiments were organized, which went marching through towns and villages, with the cross carried aloft as a banner, or worn on the breast as a badge. They sang and shouted, they waved wax candles that were lighted, and their watchword was that of their fathers, "God wills it."

Not only the children of the lower classes were caught by the contagion, but many youths of the nobility, seeing the processions sweep by their castle homes, came forth to join the glorious army. They had heard their parents tell many a story of knightly exploit, and they, too, would do chivalrous deeds. Some of them had lost their parents in previous crusades, but the armor of the dead, kept as a

dear memorial, was a constant appeal to their young hearts and susceptible feelings. They would fight with those same weapons, or sleep with their fathers in the dust of the Holy Land.

Some enlisted from unworthy motives, to get away from the restraints of home, but most were actuated by pious impulses. Of tender years, they responded readily to the call which they honestly thought came from the Master who so loved children. Girls helped to swell the ranks. Adults, and even the aged, listened to the fervid appeals of youth at the crossroads and at public places, and united their fortunes with those of the children. Vile characters to some extent attached themselves to the popular cause. But most of the recruits were boys twelve years old and upwards.

The excitement grew till the king, by advice of the University of Paris, endeavored to stem the swelling tide. The more faithful of the clergy tried to check the growing delusion, but to no purpose. Parents, who were not carried away by the frenzy, exerted themselves to stop the movement. But entreaties and commands, bolts and bars, were of no avail. The young would break out and steal away from distressed fathers and mothers who

seemed powerless to control their own children when like a mighty flood a triumphal procession rolled by the door with song and shout.

The numerous bands scattered over the country now only awaited orders from headquarters, from the commander-in-chief, Stephen, to assemble at some designated place, preparatory to proceeding as a united army to the scene of an easy conquest across the blue Mediterranean. Their eager desire was to stand within the gates of Jerusalem, and they seemed to have prophecy on their side, for Zechariah had predicted, "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

Meanwhile the infection, or epidemic, extended to Germany, where it culminated sooner than in France. Nicholas, a lad of twelve years, encouraged by an ambitious parent, led out in the movement. His rendezvous was Cologne, which, like the French shrine, was a German. religious center, where the three skulls of the Magi, with miraculous qualities, were claimed and are still said to repose, and where accordingly worshipers gathered from all quarters. To these Nicholas proclaimed the new crusade by children. He, too, had a supernatural attestation, as he was tending sheep in the field. Probably

impressed by the emperor Constantine's oft-told vision, he saw, or imagined that he saw, in the sky a blazing cross, which was ecclesiastically pronounced a pledge of victory in the holy war. He made many converts from the crowds of pilgrims coming and going, and soon had youthful lieutenants gathering recruits through a wide territory, until, on a summer day in 1212, he had twenty thousand young crusaders ready to do his bidding. The hour for parting, perhaps forever, came, and the separations between parents and children were heartrending.

The youthful warriors took up their march for the Holy Land. They advanced singing along the picturesque Rhine. They carried no weapons except faith and prayer. They unfurled to the breeze no flag except the cross. They trudged along with proud hearts and bounding spirits, and as "tramp, tramp, tramp the boys were marching," they compared experiences, and recalled their homes in cottage and in palace. They moved on to harder and harder experiences. They plunged into dark forests, where roamed wolves and bears and other wild beasts. They slept in barns, and outdoors, under the trees and on river-banks, they who had been accustomed to close their eyes under the roof of home, sweet home,

though it were ever so humble. But as the Son of man had not where to lay his head, they were willing to follow his example in lying down to rest wherever they might be when the night came on.

Their course lay through Switzerland, and they came to the Alps, whose cloud and snow-capped heights had to be crossed; but like Hannibal before, like Napoleon after their day, they did not waver,—those of them who still remained, for their number had been sadly diminished. Some had been drowned in fording bridgeless streams. Others had been seized and devoured by savage animals. Still others, after subsisting on berries and shrubs in the scarcity of better food, had perished from hunger by the wayside. Whole groups had retraced their steps as best they could to the comforts they had left.

Half of the original army, however, bravely began the ascent of the everlasting mountains. They threaded their way along primitive bridle-paths by foaming torrents. They traversed snowy crags with bleeding feet. Some of them went whirling to their death over precipices, along whose narrow ledges they endeavored to creep. Others sank down in despair, and died in the gorges and by the glaciers, and their bodies were left unburied

on the frozen ground. But after much hardship, the young crusaders who still survived reached the summit, and rejoiced as they looked down on green and fruitful valleys with silver streams far below. They pushed on for the sunny plains of Italy, where, however, they had as sad experiences as before. Many of them were made slaves, and some of the girls worse than slaves, by the Italians who had no dealings with the Germans, for the two nations were at war.

In due time Genoa and the sea burst upon the view, and the children were delighted, for they had been assured by their leader that the Mediterranean was to divide, like the Red Sea in Biblical history, and give them passage by dry land to Palestine. But when the seven thousand survivors, out of the first twenty thousand, had been disappointed in the failure of the waters to separate, and when the curiosity of the city had been satisfied by the marching of the young crusaders through the streets, they were compelled, like Dickens' poor Joe, to "move on," as so many hungry mouths of moneyless strangers could not long be conveniently fed, and especially since they were children of the then hated Germans. On only one condition could they remain, and that was that they would abandon their impracticable

project, forever forsake their native land, and cast in their lot with the Genoese. Many of them, thoroughly discouraged, did settle down in Genoa, where they afterward rose to wealth and distinction, founding some of the great families that became prominent in the republic; and many a modern Genoese, we are told, traces "his ancestry back to some boy who, born by the Rhine, had been led by a mighty delusion to find a new home by the Mediterranean."

And yet most of the crusaders clung to their hope of seeing Palestine, and they struggled on to Pisa of leaning tower fame, and there two shiploads sailed for the Holy Land. But it is not known whether they ever reached that country. No "ships passing in the night" brought any tidings of their fate. Those who did not embark from Pisa renewed the journey overland, and we hear of a remnant of them arriving at Rome, where the Pope absolved them from their vows till they had come to maturer years, and as many of them as could made their way back, separately and in straggling bands, to the German homes they had left with such sincere but visionary ideas only a few months before. Thus did the army of twenty thousand young crusaders, under the lead of Nicholas, melt away with-

out realizing that desire of their hearts to stand within the gates of Jerusalem.

The fortunes of a second army, equal in number to that of Nicholas, and pursuing, under a leader whose name is unknown, a different course over the Alps, were also disastrous in the end. How many childless, or at least broken homes, those twenty thousand other boys (and girls) must have made! They, too, had at the outset bright anticipations of triumph on the soil once trodden by the Lord and his disciples. They also drew throngs of spectators all along the route. In numerous skiffs they sailed the entire length of the charming Lake of Lucerne, and it must have seemed like a fairy scene as they sang their songs and waved their banners, while they glided over the magnificent sheet of water, and called one another's attention to Pilatus and the Rigi, those towering mountains which never witnessed gladder excursionists.

Not so romantic was their ascent of the Alps. They groped through gloomy defiles. They climbed along shelving rocks at dizzy heights, with the sound of thundering cataracts filling their ears. They crossed fathomless abysses by bridges whose narrowness would have made fathers and mothers shudder, had their children's peril been known.

It is not strange that many of this second crusading army lay down to die amid Alpine terrors, their sobs of grief unassuaged by parental tenderness, and terminating in a silence broken only, it has been said, by the "sighing of the wind through the fir-trees," while "no monument was reared, except the wild flowers, which, when spring came again, were nurtured by their dust." Their only winding-sheet was the white Alpine snow.

Those who resisted and survived such horrors descended through Italy, on the south-eastern coast of which there were enough to fill several ships. They sailed away for Palestine, but were never heard from. We could almost believe the little fleet, crowded with boys and girls, to have been so many phantom ships, so unreal does it all seem, while nevertheless it is sober history, too sober, too terribly melancholy, as we think of the possible and probable fate of those children by shipwreck or in slavery. There is one consolation: as they were bound for Jerusalem, with honest though mistaken motives, we cannot doubt that they eventually reached the desired haven of the New Jerusalem to meet the Saviour of children. Some homes were made happy again by returning crusaders, and more than one child who had gone on this famous crusade

became a parent to tell his children the wondrous tale. But most watched and waited in vain for the return of those who had gone, since, when their pilgrimage was ended, their feet were standing within the holy city above, within the gates of that upper Jerusalem.

The French enterprise, which already has been sketched in part, and which originated the double German movement, remains to be traced to its more slow conclusion. The boy Stephen, though commencing first, did not get his young crusaders together as soon as Nicholas, or as soon as that other nameless leader, each of whom quickly assembled his twenty thousand. But all France was astir, and when the child tribes did gather, there was an army of thirty thousand, mostly of boys, though there were some girls, and a few adults of both sexes.

They had no Alps and no hostile country to traverse, but from a point on the coast of their own land they were to find a way opened to them through the sea to the Holy Land. Their march was to be through sunny fields and friendly villages directly to the port of Marseilles. Perhaps their most painful experience was the parting with weeping parents. But there was the enthusiasm of numbers, and

so the thirty thousand set off with inspiring music and flying colors. There was more of pomp than with the Germans. Stephen himself rode in a magnificent chariot, under a rich canopy of brilliant hues. He had a body-guard of youths of noble birth, who were finely uniformed, and armed with glistening lances and spears, and who sat on prancing chargers gaily caparisoned. The rank and file of the youthful warriors walked, and many were "the blistered feet and tearful eyes" before Marseilles was reached. Some of the younger and more ignorant at the sight of each new town in the line of march pathetically asked, "Is that Jerusalem?"

Glad indeed were all when they came in view of the cool, blue sea. There had been not a few desertions during the weary journey of three hundred miles under a blazing sun in the heat of midsummer. And when the ocean did not divide as the innocents had been taught to expect, when the breakers continued to dash upon the shore, when the vast expanse of water remained unbroken from day to day, many more lost heart and withdrew from the enterprise. Still, many remained faithful and confident. They gazed wistfully at the numerous vessels riding the harbor and anchored at the docks, and they wished they had the

money to charter some of them for a voyage over the Mediterranean.

Finally two wealthy merchants of the city, whose ships could be seen in almost every port of the navigable globe, seemed to take pity on the young crusaders who in childish innocence daily looked for the great rolling ocean to divide. The merchants moreover felt such an interest, they said, in the holy cause, that they offered free passage to Palestine to as many pilgrims as chose to go. For the love of God and without price, said those two liberal merchants, would they provide ships for all who desired to go. Their generosity, their benevolence, was praised by every one, and Marseilles was proud of such citizens. What rejoicing there was among the children! "This," they said, "was the way through the sea which God had meant! Was it not a miracle?"

The morning for departure came, and the eager children were up bright and early, happy as they could be. They went to the churches for farewell services. They went down to the beach, about five thousand of them, and embarked upon seven vessels, while intensely interested spectators lined the shore, and while tears were shed by loving parents and relatives. They sailed away, singing a hymn (Veni, Creator Spiritus) whose solemn cadences rose

and fell on the air, as if keeping time with the gentle undulations of the waves. From the cliffs the receding ships bearing out to sea were watched, till they became mere specks in the distant horizon, and at length faded out of sight.

A year passed, and no word came from the little fleet. Two years took their flight, and still no news of the children who had sailed for the Holy Land with such fair hopes. Many were the anxious inquiries, but three years brought no tidings, and many a home of peasant and of prince in France mourned. All those children who had started but had withdrawn, were interested. The whole nation was stirred because of the not unlikely tragic fate of the young crusaders. Eighteen years came and went, and those who had gone, if living, would be children no longer. The boy of twelve would be a man of thirty. But probably all had gone down in the great deep. That was the conviction to which the public had settled down. The unexampled generosity of the two merchants had not resulted as had been anticipated.

In the year 1230, when the five thousand children had been nearly forgotten, there arrived in Europe from Cairo in Egypt an aged priest, who had been one of those to sail with

the young crusaders eighteen years before. All France, and the Continent, too, thrilled at the prospect of learning the facts; and a nation, and indeed all Europe, gave, as it were, breathless attention, as he narrated the story of the voyage. There had been smooth sailing for a while, the seven ships with their white sails like so many birds speeding before favorable breezes. They were caressed by gentle billows and rocked in the cradle of the deep, until their precious freightage of five thousand children were fast asleep, dreaming doubtless of the old homes, or of Jerusalem for which they were bound. The second day and night brought no mishap, but on the morning of the third day there arose a tempest which threatened every moment to engulf the boats. Huddled together, the children cried and prayed, and expected soon to go down into watery graves. An island, San Pietro, loomed up. Two of the ships were driving straight toward its rocks. They were certainly doomed to destruction. The passengers on the five vessels which would pass the danger in safety, with anguish saw their young companions drifting on to sure death. The two ships struck, reeled and sank with fifteen hundred of the crusaders, whose shrieks and prayers availed not.

The storm subsided, and the other five vessels floated onward, and spirits rose again, as Jerusalem after all seemed likely to be reached. But fond hopes were once more disappointed, as the thirty-five hundred surviving crusaders were sold into bondage. The two merchants who had so readily offered them a gratuitous passage turned out to be really slave-dealers, by whose orders the young crusaders were delivered to Mohammedan masters in various African cities, where they lived and died in slavery. Only a few of them ever reached the Holy Land, and they merely as captives, who were transported through Palestine clear to Bagdad on the Tigris. They had often sung of standing within the gates of Jerusalem, but right past or through the holy city they were hurried, past the Sea of Galilee of sacred memory, on to the far East, where eighteen of them suffered martyrdom rather than relinquish the Christian for the Moslem faith, and where the rest, though allowed to live, had to endure a bondage which terminated only with death.

The young crusaders started out singing, but they had no songs in the foreign lands where they served cruel taskmasters, because of the treachery of two apparently benevolent

but really rascally merchants who, it is a comfort to know, in after years were hanged for another crime. On the lonely island which marked the shipwreck in the Mediterranean was erected a memorial church, very properly called the Church of the Holy Innocents, and there worship was sustained for centuries, while its ruins still speak of the young crusaders who were seeking Jerusalem and found it, only it was the heavenly Jerusalem.

How the zeal of those, concerning whom the truth is stranger than fiction, should stimulate the young of to-day! And we do have youthful crusaders yet in countless numbers. We have only to instance the twenty-five millions who in the last century have been organized into the great Sunday-school movement, and the three and a half millions who within a score of years have been banded together under the Christian Endeavor standard, to say nothing of the millions gathered in Epworth Leagues, and of all those marshaled by the various denominations. And the encouraging thing about all these different organizations of our youth is, that intelligence is combined with enthusiasm, and that the dominant thought is not so much of the Jerusalem down here below as of "Jerusalem the Golden,"

which they are seeking over Alpine difficulties and stormy seas, and within whose gates they confidently expect some day to stand with everlasting songs upon their lips, after God's purpose has been wrought out in their lives.

JOHN WYCLIFFE THE MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION

"Truth springeth out of the earth."—Ps. 85 : 11.

XII

JOHN WYCLIFFE THE MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION

BRYANT has said:

> "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again,—
> The eternal years of God are hers."

This strikes the key-note to the character of John Wycliffe, who has been called, "the morning star of the Reformation." At a crisis in his wonderful career, when it seemed as if he were utterly overwhelmed, he gave utterance to this thrilling sentiment, "I know that in the end truth will conquer." He had faith in an overruling and conquering Providence, and what he said will be verified to our minds by a consideration of the leading events in the life of this remarkable man.

The conjectural year of his birth is 1324. He first saw the light in a small village of Yorkshire, England. There, amid hills and dales and woods and brooks, he lived as a country boy, till at about the age of seventeen he entered Oxford, where as many as thirty

thousand students were said to have been gathered, occasionally, at one time. There was not then a schoolhouse on every hill, and accordingly the few universities were largely patronized even in Wycliffe's day, when, however, the numbers at the colleges were considerably depleted because of the educational inducements held out by the monasteries. Of the reformer's pursuit of knowledge at Oxford our information is slight. But we learn that a profound religious impression was made upon the young student by the Black Death, which in 1348, after ravaging all Europe, visited England, and swept half the population into their graves. When wives forsook husbands, and mothers children, when men's hearts were failing them through fear, when more than half the clergy of Wycliffe's own shire fell before the plague, it is not strange that he wrote a pamphlet in which he claimed that the day of judgment was at hand. He was deeply moved spiritually, and his talents were henceforth consecrated to the Lord.

For ten years he prosecuted his studies at Oxford, and till nearly the close of his life he was connected with the great university as an instructor, becoming famous as the Evangelical Doctor, while at the same time three different parishes were favored with his pulpit ministra-

tions, and his name will ever be associated with his third and last field, Lutterworth, which in connection with Oxford was the scene of his multiform labors, literary and religious. At Lutterworth still stands the church (with some necessary renovations) in which he preached more than five hundred years ago, a kind of monument to his memory, upon which might very properly be inscribed his motto, "Truth will conquer."

First, Wycliffe as a Christian patriot will occupy our attention. Perhaps the most ignominious period of English history was during the reign of John, from whom had to be wrested by force Magna Charta, that great charter of constitutional liberty. Something over a century before Wycliffe was born, this king of inglorious memory had submitted to the humiliation of rendering up his kingdom to the Pope, and of receiving it back again in fief. He humbly presented tribute money to the papal legate, who first tossed it from him in scorn, but who afterward very naturally picked it up again. The same monarch laid his crown at the feet of Rome's proud ambassador, who first actually kicked it from him in contempt, and who then graciously allowed the abject king to replace it on his head. England protested against this subjection to a

foreign power, and soon refused the tribute demanded. It was a renewal of this demand in 1365, with a further requirement of the payment of the arrears for years, which brought Wycliffe into public view, after he had passed the age of forty.

He took sides with an indignant people. The British spirit was roused. Under the lead of Edward the Third and his son, the chivalrous Black Prince, it had won the laurels of Crecy and Poitiers, in the hundred years' war with France, by reason of which England now stood at the head of European affairs, and therefore was not in a mood to submit tamely to a surrender of national independence. The popular indignation grew, till it found expression in the Parliament of 1366, which, under the direction of the great reformer, its most prominent member, or at least its inspiring genius, gave forth the ringing decision, that "the King, with all his subjects, should with all their force and power resist" the papal claim. Being challenged to defend the action of the nation's legislators, Wycliffe did not hesitate to do so. Year after year he maintained his position, saying at one time that England could not endure the continual drain Romeward of her resources through ecclesiastical channels, "though our realm had a

large hill of gold." The agitation was kept up, and was stirred to a white heat, when a papal nuncio with a train of servants and a half dozen horses came to press Rome's demand.

A conference to settle the questions at issue was called in 1374 at Bruges, and Wycliffe was one of England's commissioners. As he entered that town, which was then a commercial center, he may have heard the chimes of that belfry which was erected that very century, and which Longfellow has thus immortalized:

> "In the ancient town of Bruges,
> In the quaint old Flemish city,
> As the evening shades descended,
> Low and loud and sweetly blended,
> Low at times and loud at times,
> And changing like a poet's rhymes,
> Rang the beautiful wild chimes
> From the belfry in the market
> Of the ancient town of Bruges."

But if our reformer was introduced to such sweet music, he also became acquainted with the ways that are dark of intriguing diplomacy, and he had to return to his country disappointed, so far as any real concessions from the court on the Tiber were concerned.

The contest was continued, till the Parliament of 1376 once more voiced the national

resistance to foreign encroachments—a Parliament that was called Good and is still termed such in history, because its sentiments as molded by Wycliffe met with the approval of the people. But was the truth, the cause of freedom, to conquer? Every effort was made to crush its most distinguished advocate in our hero who in 1377 was summoned for trial before a convocation in St. Paul's Cathedral, whither he was accompanied by that powerful protector, John of Gaunt, "the time-honored Lancaster" of Shakespearean fame, a son of the reigning sovereign. Would even such a friend be able to save Wycliffe from determined enemies? The building was crowded, and when it was proposed that the reformer should be seated, the bishop objected, and insisted that the criminal should stand in so august a presence. From this arose a violent altercation, which terminated with Lancaster's threat, "I will pluck the bishop by the hair out of the church." At once there was a tumult, in the midst of which Wycliffe escaped, and a subsequent mob was quelled only by royal command.

With the death of Edward the Third and the accession of Richard the Second, and with Wycliffe's advice to the new government to retain for its own use the treasures gathered

to be sent abroad, came a second attempt to crush him, in another trial to which he was summoned in Lambeth Palace. Thither he repaired in 1378, unaccompanied by Lancaster who was no longer influential in the changed court, but this time, as the reformer made his defense, the popular demonstrations in his favor were such that the Princess of Wales saw fit to order a dismissal of the case, and so he escaped with only a harmless reprimand.

Thus at the peril of his life did the noble patriot withstand the slightest submission to a foreign ecclesiastical power. English liberty, and, remotely, American freedom, was at stake. Wycliffe's sentiments were doubtless reflected by Lancaster, whom the greatest of dramatists makes to say:

> "This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
> Dear for her reputation through the world,
> Is now leas'd out, I die pronouncing it,
> Like to a tenement, or pelting farm.
> England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
> Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
> Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
> With ink blots, and rotten parchment bonds."

Would the time ever come when papal bulls and excommunications would be defied by British courage, when every vestige of vassalage would be wiped out? Yes, the truth was eventually to conquer, but it was not to be in

Wycliffe's day, nor till one hundred and fifty years after his death, when, under Henry the Eighth, England did finally break off the foreign yoke which she had chafingly worn so long. The patriot reformer was right, when he said, "I know that in the end truth will conquer." Temporarily crushed to the ground, it "springeth out of the earth," for "the eternal years of God are hers."

In the second place, as a religious reformer Wycliffe is deserving of study. In this respect he had a similar conflict with his opponents. The conditions of the Church as well as of the State needed the attention of a masterly mind, and when the great papal schism occurred, by which Christendom had for half a century two popes who damned each other in true excommunicatory fashion, Wycliffe concluded that they were both right in their opinion of each other, and he decided to throw himself into the great work of positive religious reform.

There is a constant tendency to deterioration in religion. There was a period when monasteries (in their infancy) were excellent institutions. They stood a bulwark against barbarism, whose influx threatened the overthrow of Christianity. They were the conservators of a Christian civilization. Origi-

nally, as another has said, "the monastery seems to us a sweet and attractive retreat, presenting, with its holy quiet, disturbed only by the occasional chimes and the soft, subdued strains of the morning and evening hymn, a striking contrast to the neighboring castle, with its noise and its often warlike tumult." This was all very beautiful, but, with the accumulation of wealth and with splendid endowments, there came corruption and decay. The monks lived in ease and luxury, and neglected their spiritual duties, and they let the people perish for lack of knowledge.

It was to remedy this state of affairs that a century before Wycliffe the Mendicants came into existence, the Franciscans and Dominicans, who, barefoot and clad in coarse woolen gowns, went everywhere preaching the Word, begging as they went to supply their daily needs. They did a vast amount of good, till they, too, as orders, became rich. As their riches increased they degenerated, and they became more anxious to grant absolution for a proper monetary consideration than to preach the gospel. "These friars have piled up their mansions to a royal altitude," complained a contemporary, Matthew Paris; "they beset the dying bed of the noble and the wealthy in order to extort secret bequests from the fears of guilt

and superstition." Chaucer, the father of English poetry, as his friend Wycliffe was of English prose, said in modern phrase (for English then is hardly intelligible to the reader now):

> "Therefore instead of weeping and prayers,
> Men might give silver to the poor friars."

The Mendicants, like the monks before them, had degenerated. The masses were no longer being saved, they were only being shorn by professional beggars, they were only being fleeced by hirelings who made a show of poverty and piety, but who reveled in luxury and vice.

To take the place of these unworthy characters, Wycliffe sent forth his "Poor Priests," or, as we would say, his lay workers, who were to go like the Mendicants in bare feet and in simple clothing, but who were to go in a different spirit; not to hear confessions and to receive fees, but to preach the gospel and to receive only their living. They were not, such was the instruction of the reformer, to imitate those whom, says Blackburn, "we see, after the service, sitting in ale-houses, or at the gambling-tables, or hasting off with their hounds. After sermon, visit the sick, the aged, the poor, the little children, and help them as you can." They were, in short, to carry the

pure gospel to the neglected masses. It was a movement, which, like the Wesleyan, much later, created a great furor.

The complaint rose long and loud against this preaching, not only in the churches, said a shocked archbishop, but "in public squares, and other profane places," and that, too, "without any episcopal or papal authorization." The height of sacrilege was reached when Wycliffe attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation, that the bread and wine became the very flesh and blood of Christ. While presenting his views on this subject in a lecture at Oxford, he was interrupted by the university authorities, who had hastily conferred together, and had decided that he must desist. He was thus silenced in 1381, where he had so long been an honored professor. He was grieved to be cut off from the pleasant associations of a lifetime (for he was now within three years of his death), but he did not falter. As he retired from the classic shades to quiet Lutterworth, he uttered the sentence which we have taken as his motto, "I know that in the end the truth will conquer."

In that faith he redoubled his zeal against the Mendicants. But most prejudicial to his cause at this time was the unfortunate uprising of the peasants, who had caught some of his

ideas of liberty, but who had not imbibed his spirit of self-control, and of orderly procedure, and of obedience to law. We sometimes suppose communism to be of recent origin and growth, but there in England five hundred years ago a hundred thousand communists, bearing such names as Wat Tyler and Jack Straw and Tom Miller, marched to the popular rhyme as enunciated by their mad leader, John Ball:

> "When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?"

On to London they advanced, with hatred for all classes except their own, and they made a vigorous use of the torch, till they were suppressed by disciplined troops. Injustice and wrong they undoubtedly had suffered, but they did what only injured their own cause when they rose in rebellion and riot. They thus increased the public disapprobation of Wycliffe, the great advocate of freedom, but of a liberty which did not mean license. This revolt so augmented the unpopularity of the reformer that the time seemed ripe for his final destruction.

For the third time he was summoned to London, and the synod of ecclesiastics was about to give shape to their condemnation, when an earthquake suddenly shook the whole

city. The assembly was nearly dissolved in a panic at what seemed an evil omen, when the archbishop adroitly pacified his frightened minions by the ingenious deliverance, "As in the interior of the earth there are enclosed foul airs and winds which break out in earthquakes, so that the earth is purged of them, though not without great violence, even so there have been many heresies hitherto shut up in the hearts of the unbelieving, but by the condemnation thereof the kingdom has been purged, though not without trouble and great agitation." The reformer was not slow to turn the natural phenomenon, the seismic disturbance, to his advantage. "The earth cries out," he declared, "against the wrong," and by his frequent references to the incident he managed to affix to the council for all time the name of "The Earthquake Synod." The civil power now also was arrayed, so far as possible, against his evangelistic laborers, and he himself was soon tried again at Oxford; but still he was not silenced.

Then came a severe illness, probably a paralytic stroke, from which he was not expected to recover. Into what was supposed to be his death-chamber a delegation of monks gained entrance to get from his dying lips a recantation. He remained silent for a little, then

asked to be lifted up in his bed, and his visitors eagerly listened to hear him retract, when to their astonishment and confusion, from his raised pillow and with a commanding look, he said with a decided energy, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars." He was as good as his word.

Truth was yet to conquer, for he recovered to complete with able assistants his greatest work, the translation of the entire Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate. This was brought out in the Lutterworth parish in 1382, the first version of the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular of his countrymen, and the basis of all subsequent English versions. His preachers might die, but if he could give England the ever-living Word, he knew success was assured. To be sure, a Roman chronicler of that age mourns because the Bible was thus "laid open to the laity, and to women who can read," to quote his own language, "and in this way the gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under foot of swine." But the swinish people and women appreciated the pearl, nevertheless. They would pay as high as two hundred dollars for a single manuscript copy of the sacred books, there being as yet no printing press to multiply copies. A farmer would give a load of hay for a few leaves of the New

Testament. Little circles were organized for the common reading at night of the precious volume. There were those who memorized portions of the contents, and who repeated what they had learned to delighted friends and relatives.

Wycliffe, having now inaugurated his two great enterprises of having the gospel carried to the masses, and of making God's own Word accessible to the common people, was ready to depart and be with Christ, and the end soon came. Near the close of 1384 he was administering the sacrament in his Lutterworth church, when there came the second and fatal stroke of paralysis, and on the last day of the year he expired. He fell at his post, at the very altar, "struck by the horrible judgment of God," said a papal writer (Walsingham); "a beautiful ending of a beautiful life," says the well-known Protestant historian (Daubigné) of the Reformation.

Had the truth conquered? Nay, there followed a reaction, when the Wycliffites or Lollards, as they were called, were imprisoned and burned and expatriated. But, after all, a hidden remnant survived and from them developed the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, reappearing first in the Hussite movement, and then in the Lutheran. There is

something suggestive in the picture said to be drawn on a leaf of an ancient prayer-book: at the top of the page Wycliffe is represented as striking a spark, which Huss below is fanning into a flame, while, underneath both, Luther is waving a lighted torch. The truth did eventually conquer after this fashion.

After Wycliffe's death there came apparent disaster. So mighty was the reaction that in 1428, forty-four years after he had been in his grave, his bones, by order of the hierarchy, were disinterred, burned, and the ashes were flung into the Swift, the stream flowing through Lutterworth. "Thus," said Thomas Fuller, the old historian, who did not believe the truth was conquered even then, "this brook did convey his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow sea, and this into the wide ocean. And so the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over." The same thought is expressed by Wordsworth in the immortal lines:

"As thou these ashes, little brook, wilt bear
Into the Avon—Avon to the tide
Of Severn—Severn to the narrow seas—
Into main ocean they,—this deed accurst,
An emblem yields to friends and enemies,
How the bold teacher's doctrine, sanctified
By truth, shall spread throughout the world dispersed."

So it even is. Constitutional freedom, the propagation of the gospel by word of mouth and by the circulated Bible, the cause of civil and religious liberty, for which Wycliffe lived and died and rose again in his exhumed and scattered dust—the progress of these eternal principles of truth has been marvelous. Let us see to it that the glorious triumph shall roll on, until there is the completed victory in the universal sway of pure and undefiled religion. "I know that in the end truth will conquer;" "Truth springeth out of the earth;"

> "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again, —
> The eternal years of God are hers."

Thus have said most truly poet and psalmist and reformer, giving us the Scriptural two or three witnesses whereby a matter is established.

THE REFORMATION

"That ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present; let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God."—2 THESS. 2: 2-4.

XIII

THE REFORMATION

At the outset the organization of Christian churches was very simple. In different communities, believers came together in each locality from a mutual affinity. The only relation between the little companies in the various towns and cities was that of spiritual fellowship. Very naturally, the churches in the larger places were looked up to, and they gradually came to exert an influence which the bodies at less important points did not have. Alexandria, Antioch and Rome, of metropolitan dimensions, were correspondingly influential religiously. By and by it was recognized that the capital of the whole empire, the Eternal City on the Tiber, was the center of authority for civilians, and why should it not be for Christians? Repeatedly something like this would occur: a theological controversy would spring up, and the parties to it in casting about for an arbitrator would think first of Rome. Both would pay the

most deferential respect to the church there, each would see which could say the handsomest things in her favor, in the hope of securing each her favorable decision. What was thus accorded to Rome by way of exaggerated compliment was little by little claimed as a right.

Princes, too, sought her favors, knowing the esteem and reverence in which she was held by the masses. It was worth something to secure such a powerful ally, whose dominion was limited to no single country, but was extended over all Europe. By such a process, Rome after long ages came to occupy her position as supreme over Church and State. But this accession of strength, this possession of augmented power, was not the worst feature. Christianity, with the growth of the hierarchical spirit, became more and more secular, and less and less spiritual. Religion became increasingly a matter of forms and ceremonies. Pilgrimages to holy places and bodily scourgings became of great merit, and the two could be combined by going barefoot in the snow to some sacred shrine.

Of course, these places could not be kept up without persons to superintend, without priests, and these officials had to be supported. There were the most ingenious devices for obtaining

money. An alleged fragment of Noah's ark would be displayed, or a portion of the original cross, or a feather from the wing of an archangel, or some other relic. At a chapel in Saxony, there was an image of the Virgin and the divine Child, who would bow very graciously if the offering were sufficiently large, but who would avert the face with manifest displeasure if the gift were small. When the Reformation set in, and the ungodly police examined into the matter, it was ascertained that there were suspicious wires and pulleys which would work the mechanical contrivance to perfection.

But the pilgrimages and the flagellations and the offerings went on for centuries. It was a happy thought of Pope Boniface VIII to propose in the year 1300 a pilgrimage to Rome at the beginning of every century, each toiling pilgrim who should perform the meritorious act to receive entire forgiveness, complete absolution, from him who occupied the pontifical throne. Of course each one was expected to bring some fitting testimonial of value received, and as two hundred thousand pilgrims from every part of Europe are said to have gone to Rome in a single month during the year 1300, Boniface was pleased with the success of his project. It was so nice a thing

that the jubilee was put at intervals of fifty years. That worked so well that the time was shortened to a generation, to thirty-three years, and then to twenty-five, a quarter-centennial. Finally, it was felt that the dear people should be allowed to contribute their pence every year, and each at his home.

Proper agents were, therefore, sent out, to go everywhere with papal indulgences. Murder could be pardoned for a certain consideration; incest and every other crime had its price. Purgatory was invented to increase the revenues, for souls could be rescued from that for a certain amount of money. There were paintings which pictured persons writhing in the flames, and these still exist in the old countries, making infidels now, furnishing stock for such lecturers as Ingersoll, but anciently stirring the sympathies of the superstitious. It was not infrequent to make appeals in behalf of those who were suffering the torments of the damned. Tetzel, who roused Luther and precipitated the Reformation, used these words in an address: "Hearken to your departed parents, who cry to you from the bottomless abyss: 'We are enduring horrible torment! a small alms would deliver us; you can give it, and you will not!'" Thus it was that the priests extorted money from ignorant people, assuring them gravely

that it brought forgiveness to the living and dead alike.

When we can curb our indignation at such infamy, we are rather pleased at the story which Froude, on the authority of a Spanish novelist, relates of a man who got the better of a lying priest. He put a shilling in the plate in behalf of a deceased acquaintance, and then asked, "Is my friend's soul out?" The answer was in the affirmative. "Quite sure?" was the further inquiry. There was not a doubt as to the happy deliverance, whereupon came the reply, "Very well, if he is out of purgatory, they will not put him in again: it is a bad shilling!"

Such were the abominations which gave rise to the Reformation, and they were inexcusable. What if St. Peter's, which was more than a century in building, and which has cost sixty million dollars, and which is the admiration of every visitor to Rome to-day, did need funds! What if Michael Angelo did take the Parthenon which was erected before Christ, and "suspend it in midair" in the wondrous dome of the great cathedral! What if this noble structure did need completing! That was no reason why people should have been practically encouraged to sin by the promise of pardon on payment of a specified sum. Under such cir-

cumstances, it is not strange that the priesthood came to possess from a third to a half and sometimes two-thirds of the land in the various countries of Europe. Is it any wonder, with such inducements to sin, that immorality and corruption so largely reigned?

There were bright and shining examples of piety; there were (and are) many good Catholics, eminent saints indeed, whom we are all glad to canonize; but they were in the minority. The monasteries sometimes became brothels, and when Luther, renouncing celibacy, married an escaped nun, and when it was said that Antichrist would be the fruit of the unlawful union, there was such a state of affairs in the very convents, that Erasmus could say, "If monk and nun produce Antichrist, there must have been legions of Antichrists these many years." The impurity of the religious orders was the common talk for a long time. Some of the popes themselves were notorious debauchees.

Pope Innocent VIII, among others, was not at all innocent, as his name would imply, and Dante, the matchless poet, very properly consigned several such to hell, where they belonged. There was scarcely a crime which was not attached to the papal chair. Not long preceding the Reformation the profligate Alex-

ander Borgia, though shamelessly unfit to be the ecclesiastical head of the religious world, came to the position by bribing the cardinals, "four mules, laden with silver," says the historian, being publicly driven to the palace of the most influential cardinal. And his son, Cæsar Borgia, whom he highly honored, was such a monster of depravity as to stab to death a courtier who sought refuge under the pontifical robe. At the very feet of his father, he committed this red-handed murder, "and the blood of the victim spurted in the pontiff's face." Such were the doings in the Church itself, which notwithstanding its name was neither holy nor Catholic, even as afterward it could be said of the "Holy Roman Empire," that it was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire. Verily, there had been a "falling away" since the time of the apostles.

To one who asked Luther sneeringly where the Church was before his movement, the acute German replied, "Where was your face this morning before you washed it?" He recognized that there were true and genuine Christians in the Church, and it was his to bring them out, to protest against the obscuration of the simple original gospel. Protestantism was the old Church with the impurities washed away, and the beneficial influences

of this great reformatory movement can hardly be overestimated, and that, too, not only religiously but secularly.

It was the emancipation of the human mind from priestly thraldom. It was associated with all that is glorious in history. It was the handmaid of letters, and is yet, as is not the Romanism which to-day lists among the prohibited authors Hallam, Hume and Gibbon, Spinoza, Locke and Bacon, and also the grand old blind poet, Milton. Indeed, the index prohibitory and expurgatory rules out much of our best literature. Nor has the hierarchy been more favorable to science, for, from the time of Galileo who was persecuted and condemned for insisting that the world did move, this reactionary power has seemed determined to keep the world from moving in any true sense. Our best civilization is the product of Protestantism, which has ever stood for education and enlightenment, as Catholicism has not, for in Protestant Europe the general intelligence averages much higher than in Catholic Europe, as every informed person will admit. Where Rome holds sway, illiteracy is confessedly and frightfully prevalent. Most true are Macaulay's striking words, when he draws his historic comparison: "The loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe," he says,

in speaking of Romanism, "have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor, while Protestant countries, once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, have been turned by skill and industry into gardens, and can boast of a long list of heroes and statesmen, philosophers and poets." Such are the facts as written by the historian, and we feel that God must have been in the movement which has so manifestly operated for the betterment of mankind.

The Reformation has also given us the blessing of civil liberty. We are familiar with Rome's claim to temporal as well as spiritual sovereignty, and we know how detrimental this has been to political freedom. We can never forget how one of the greatest of English monarchs, Henry II, did penance at the tomb of Becket, and there submitted meekly to a flogging administered by monks. We have read of the German emperor humbly holding the stirrup for Pope Gregory VII to mount his animal, while the same renowned Hildebrand, as he is more generally called, made Henry IV of Germany wait three days in the garb of a penitent and in the snow, before admitting him to the castle at Canossa; a circumstance which made Bismarck say a few

years ago, in his conflict with the Jesuits, that Germany was not going to Canossa again. As we value our civil liberty should we be grateful to God for the Reformation.

We should likewise remember its distinctly religious significance. A priesthood had been put between the soul and its God, and the teaching of the Church had taken the place of that of the Scriptures. Luther gave the Bible to the world, from which it had long been kept. He gave his beloved Germans the Word of God in the vernacular, in their own language. It cost him much labor, but he prepared a version which has been that of the fatherland ever since, though it has recently undergone a revision. While translating the inspired pages occurred that episode of hurling his inkstand at the devil whom he thought he saw, and the black spot then made on the wall long remained. Whether the ink on that occasion did good service or not against the evil one, certain it is that from that day printer's ink in the circulation of the Scriptures round the globe has been putting Satan to flight. When we think of the mental stimulus, the intellectual uplift, which the reading of the Bible everywhere gives, to say nothing of the more spiritual results, we can in some measure begin to appreciate the benefits of

the Reformation, which unchained God's Word, and gave it to the people.

The special truth of justification by faith is that for which, perhaps, we should be most thankful to a good Providence working in the Protestant movement of the sixteenth century. There has ever been a painful effort on the part of the human to merit eternal bliss. You may recollect what Gibbon says of Hermit John, who lived in the fourth century. In a mountain in Egypt the recluse had a cell, in which he remained for fifty years without ever opening the door, without companionship, without any food prepared by fire or culinary process. There for five days in the week he prayed and meditated, only on Saturdays and Sundays giving audience through a small window to the crowds of pilgrims coming from every part of Christendom, including an ambassador from the Emperor Theodosius himself. Who would not gladly pass such a solitary life in a forbidding cell on a lonely mountain-side, if that would insure an eternity of happiness in one of the many mansions!

More astounding still has been the conduct of those known in ecclesiastical history as pillar saints. For instance, there is St. Simeon Stylites, who about 433 A. D. took his stand

on the top of a column or pillar near Antioch. At a height of thirty-six feet he spent day and night in devotions; he never lay down for rest but kept constantly on his feet, and when a running sore broke out on one foot he stood on the other. He ate only one scanty meal a day, and for thirty-seven years he thus mortified the flesh and maintained his position, till his sanctity was so widely recognized as to draw to his aërial retreat for consultation with him bishops and at least three Roman emperors. And that was in the region of Cilicia and Syria, where Paul had preached justification by faith and not by works.

The celebrated Daniel also, who succeeded to Simeon's reputation, maintained himself for thirty-three years on a column four miles from Constantinople, where for days together he was covered with snow and ice. Many afterward thus tried to save themselves by a mistaken righteousness of their own, and that is the secret of the whole monastic system. People have willingly dwelt in cells and practised there all sorts of austerities, in the hope of placating an angry God. Rigors and mortifications, fastings and flagellations, have been multiplied, because the truth of justification by faith has not been clearly and strongly grasped.

Take the Scala Santa at Rome, that Holy Staircase, so called because Christ is said to have ascended and descended it when he appeared before Pilate;—why have those twenty-eight marble steps been climbed by so many thousands on hands and knees, while with tears and prayers the devout have kissed each sacred step? Inciting to all this has been the meritorious idea, as if atonement could thus be made for the multitude of sins weighing down every guilty spirit. More than a millennium of years ago, we are informed, Charlemagne, whose dominion was nearly as extensive as that of the Cæsars in their palmiest days, not only went to Rome to receive his crown from the hands of a pope, but he there eased his conscience, or tried to do so, by superstitiously kissing each of the twenty-eight steps in the famous staircase, which every modern visitor to the Eternal City goes to see.

It was as Martin Luther, seven hundred years after Charlemagne, was painfully going through this same act of devotion on Pilate's staircase, that there flashed across his mind the immortal text, "The just shall live by faith," whereupon he stopped the useless penance, and ever after rejoiced in salvation by grace, as a free gift. From the time of the

nailing of his theses on the church-door at Wittenberg in 1517, justification by faith and not by works, not by penance, not by laborious human efforts of any kind, was the glad tidings which he proclaimed to a groaning, guilt-burdened world. This central truth of the Reformation emancipates the human spirit from legalism. It breaks down the middle wall of partition reared between man and his God, and gives him free and direct and personal access to the Saviour. The blood of Christ, and not human merit, becomes the ground of salvation. This is the truth which the Reformation rescued from a long burial amid the rubbish of ceremonies and priestly absolutions.

MARTIN LUTHER THE REFORMER

" The righteous shall live by faith."—ROMANS 1: 17.

XIV

MARTIN LUTHER THE REFORMER

THE most striking figure in the reformatory epoch was Martin Luther, and it is worth while to look into the personal life of one who changed the history of the world.

His youth is full of interest. He was born at Eisleben in 1483. His parents were German peasants. The father was a miner, and with his wife and infant son removed to Mansfield, six miles away, where mining was more extensively carried on. There he struggled with poverty, and the mother carried in the wood on her back. Their circumstances improved, and yet their home was one where economy had to be practised. Martin being the firstborn naturally had his part of the domestic burden to bear. His was not, therefore, a very sunny childhood.

In the very common parental severity of that time, he knew what it was to be frequently whipped. His father once applied the rod to him with such vigor that he tem-

porarily ran away from home. And yet he was conscious of having the love of his father, whom he afterward tenderly recalled as having kneeled and prayed for him at his boyhood's bedside. His mother, too, once flogged him till the blood ran, because he had taken a single nut. In his maturer years he properly felt that he had been too harshly dealt with, and he expressed it as his conviction that in discipline the apple should go with the rod, that more of love should go with the punishment. He felt the injustice of being whipped by his schoolmaster fifteen times during one forenoon. That he appreciated kindness is indicated by the fact that a stronger boy, who used to carry him, a weakly child, to and from school, was afterward very lovingly remembered.

At the age of fourteen he was sent for better educational advantages to Magdeburg, where he helped to support himself by singing for small gifts from door to door. Once a quartet of boys was singing before the door of a farmhouse, when the owner came out, and said roughly, "Where are you, young rascals?" and they were so frightened that they ran away as fast as they could. But he called after them to come back and get some food which he had for them in his hand. They

had been so often ill-treated that they thought his gruff voice was indicative of an unkindness to which they were no strangers.

After a year at Magdeburg, Martin was transferred to another school at Eisenach, where he pursued his studies for four years. Here also he sang from house to house, and it was thus that he was brought to the attention of the wealthy Cotta lady, at whose luxurious table he more than once sat by cordial invitation, and he never forgot her Christian hospitality. It was at the Eisenach school, that the master, John Trebonius, every morning on entering the room where his pupils were gathered took off his classical cap respectfully, in recognition of possible greatness before him in embryo. One of the boys to whom he bowed actually was to become a great reformer, and Luther may have been inspired to do his best by the encouragement given from an expectant teacher.

To the university at Erfurt he went in 1501, intending to become a lawyer. "My dear father," he said, "by his labor and the sweat of his brow enabled me to go there." It was in the library of this institution that he first saw a complete copy of the Bible, at the age of nearly twenty, and he read the book with great avidity. He excelled as a scholar and

was getting on finely, when there came a crisis in his young life.

In the summer of 1505 he made a visit to his parents in the old home at Mansfield. He was returning to Erfurt when he was overtaken by a violent thunder-storm. The lightning struck at his very feet. He fell on his knees at so narrow an escape from death. He felt that he was not prepared to meet his God in judgment, and he thereupon resolved to lead a strictly religious life. He would not be a lawyer, after all, but he would become a monk. After a couple of weeks, one midnight the doors of the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt opened and closed, and Luther was lost to the world. He wrote his father of the solemn step he had taken, but he did not receive the parental benediction. His father in reply expressed his displeasure, but the decision was irrevocable, and Luther settled down to all the austerities of cloister life. He performed the most menial tasks with brush and broom. He begged in the streets for his order. He fasted and prayed, and sighed and wept, and by the usual rigors tried to merit eternal happiness. One morning he was found insensible, and was brought back to consciousness by the sweet notes of a flute played by a brother.

He became a priest. He was called to a pro-

fessorship at Wittenberg. He was sent on a mission to Rome. Penniless and barefoot, after the manner of pilgrims, he trudged along over the Alps, getting sustenance at the monasteries on the way, or at the farmhouses. When the Eternal City first burst upon his vision, he fell on his knees, and with uplifted hands exclaimed, "Hail to thee, holy Rome!" But he did not find this great center of his religion to be as holy as he had anticipated. He was shocked to see pope and cardinals living in such splendor, so unlike the apostles whose successors they were believed to be. He heard immoral priests rattling off seven masses, while he was reverently completing one. He learned of those officiating at the sacrament jocosely saying in Latin, "Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain," while deluded worshipers thought the wafer was being solemnly consecrated. But he himself went honestly through all the pious devotions which were common.

He sought Rome's holy staircase, which so many had ascended in order to find peace, and on its steps there dawned upon him the supreme truth of justification by faith, "out of which," he said afterward, "through which, and to which all my theological opinions ebb and flow day and night." The Reformation,

not formally but really, was launched from that moment.

Soon after his return to Wittenberg, there came the break with Rome. Leo X sat on the pontifical throne. A great cathedral designed by Michael Angelo stood unfinished. St. Peter's must be completed, must be made, what it has become, the grandest structure for worship ever erected on earth. The completion of this magnificent edifice required money, and means could be secured by a general sale of indulgences. The notorious Tetzel came with the traffic into Germany. "Come," he said to the multitudes thronging the churches in response to the sound of ringing bells, "and I will give you letters, all properly sealed, by which even the sins you *intend* to commit may be pardoned." The money was poured into a chest that stood before a large red cross.

It was this abuse which stirred Luther, and which led him in 1517 to post his immortal theses on the church door at Wittenberg. There was tremendous excitement, which spread far and wide. Leo at first said, "It is a drunken German who has written the theses; he will think differently about them when sober." But he was no more intoxicated than was Peter at Pentecost, when a similar charge was made. There followed conferences and

discussions to see if the reformer could not be silenced. From a conference at Augsburg he felt it necessary to escape for his life by night. A papal nuncio came from Rome bearing the Golden Rose, with which it was hoped to gain over Luther's most powerful friend and protector, but the noble Frederick was not so easily won. We are reminded of a similar attempt previously to silence Savonarola, the illustrious Italian reformer, who to the suggestion of the red hat of a cardinal awaiting him if he would cease his reformatory movement replied that he preferred the red crown of martyrdom; and this he afterward received in Florence. The wily Roman legate tried his oiliness on Luther, complimenting him on having made so great a stir while yet so young, but expressing great sorrow of heart that so gifted a man should so misdirect his energies, and then he could proceed no further, for he broke down in tears. The reformer did not yield to what he says he recognized as crocodile tears.

He was next challenged to the great Leipsic discussion with the famous Doctor Eck, who was the ablest debater the Church of Rome had. Two hundred students from Wittenberg went to the discussion, and a thronged house listened to the two champions. Since, however,

argument did not prevail against the growing heresy, there came in due time the Pope's bull of excommunication, which demanded the burning of Luther's writings, the withholding of all intercourse with the heretic, and, if he remained obdurate, his final deliverance to the authorities, who knew how to burn the living person as well as the written word. Was Luther frightened into submission? On the contrary, he publicly announced that the next morning the Roman decretals would be burned. In the presence of a vast multitude the program was carried out, and the papal bull went up in smoke amid shouts of applause. Hundreds of students enjoyed the scene, and they sang a Te Deum and a dirge. Some of them drove through the town blowing brass trumpets, and carrying a banner "emblazoned with a bull four yards in length," and this, with other obnoxious writings, they cast into the fire for additional fuel, while they sang another Te Deum and a requiem. And thus came about the final rupture with the great ecclesiastical power enthroned on the Tiber.

There next came the dramatic contest with the empire itself. Charles V, in 1521, summoned Luther to the Diet at Worms. The emperor was not to be disobeyed, though it seemed probable that the reformer was going

to his death. He bade his weeping friends farewell, he passed through Leipsic where he had debated with Eck, through Erfurt at whose university he had completed his education, through Eisenach where he had studied in his youth. There he made his way to the house of the beloved Lady Cotta, and as he stood beneath the window where he once sang for bread and where he experienced a Christian woman's kindness, as memories of the past came up, the tears flowed freely. He continued his journey, and drawing near the city of Worms, a friend begged him to proceed no farther, if he valued his life, whereupon he spoke those words which have been ringing down the centuries ever since: "Were there as many devils there as there are tiles upon the roofs, yet would I enter that city." When he entered it, the streets were crowded with people eager to see the miner's son who had defied the Pope, and who was now to appear before the most powerful monarch on earth.

There followed that celebrated defense before the emperor in the presence of perhaps the most distinguished audience that ever gathered. Dignitaries, civil and religious, were there in full force, and the vast hall shone with splendid regalia. "Pluck up thy spirit, little monk," said an armed baron, as the re-

former moved toward the platform; and he did show a courageous front, as he spoke before that great assembly, and closed with the eloquent peroration, "Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by the clearest reasoning, I cannot and I will not retract. Here I stand; I can do no otherwise. God help me! Amen."

Of course the decision was against him, and as soon as his safe-conduct expired, he was to be seized and delivered up to the emperor, who, though urged to the contrary, stood by his agreement because he said that he did not wish to blush as the emperor Sigismund did when Huss charged him with violating his pledged word. But at the expiration of the legal document of protection Luther would no longer be safe. He must, therefore, hasten his departure, that he might get as far away as possible from his persecutors while yet under the imperial shield.

In the dusk of an evening he was entering the Thuringian forest. Suddenly there issued from the gloom of the woods armed and masked horsemen, who seized him, threw a cloak about him, and with their prisoner disappeared in the darkness. They pursued a circuitous route, and at eleven o'clock in the night they neared an ancient fortress standing

on an eminence and cut off from all approach except by a drawbridge, which was let down, and over which they passed into the castle, whose doors opened and immediately closed. Many supposed that he had been kidnapped by enemies and killed, but he was a prisoner of friends, who at the moving of the elector Frederick had taken this method to hide him from his persecutors, who soon would have been at liberty to carry out the purpose of the adjourned Diet. Only a few knew that he was safe in Wartburg Castle, where he exchanged the garb of a monk for the dress of a knight. As "Squire George" he let his beard grow, roamed the woods in search of strawberries, hunted partridges and other game.

But in his seclusion he also studied. He began his German version of the Bible, which has been used ever since, except that the Germans now like ourselves have also a revised version. He completed the New Testament there. In that castle also, where, he said, "Birds from their homes in the trees do continually praise God," may have been suggested that best of all Luther's hymns:

> "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott."
> "A mighty fortress is our God."

There came labors still more abundant

during the next quarter of a century, which covered the rest of the reformer's life. Because of excesses among his followers at Wittenberg he determined to leave his retreat and to return to his old field of action. Carlstadt, a fellow professor, had gone off into one of those vagaries which occasionally seize the human mind. He became imbued with mysticism, renounced all learning, bought a small farm, wore a peasant's coat and became known as "Neighbor Andrew," thus antedating the Brook Farm experiment near Boston by American literati. Luther once saw him standing with bare feet, loading stable refuse upon a cart, and we are reminded of Ripley and Hawthorne and others engaged at such tasks.

Carlstadt became a socialist of the extreme type, holding the most extravagant views, advocating the violent destruction of images in the churches, favoring polygamy, urging the reversion of all property every fifty years to the original owners. The strange movement grew till there was an armed uprising of peasants. "Forward now!" said one of their leaders, "while the fire is hot; let not the blood cool upon your swords." Convents and castles were burned to the ground. There were at one time thirty thousand men under

arms. It was the beginnings of this craze which brought Luther from the Wartburg to Wittenberg.

He was a reformer, but not a revolutionist, and with marvelous common sense he held the reins and kept the wheels of progress from being dashed to pieces upon dangerous rocks. He laughed people out of an imaginary illness, known as the sweating sickness, which was spreading like an epidemic among the nervous and hysterical. He himself awoke one night in a profuse perspiration, and he believed that if he had not resisted with all his might he also would have fallen ill. He could name several witnesses whom he compelled to get out of bed, and who afterward laughed at their fancied sickness. He opposed all that was fanatical and extravagant.

Time would fail to tell of all his activities. He wrote an answer to Henry VIII, who by his defense of the papacy gained the title, "Defender of the Faith," which English sovereigns still bear, although for centuries it has been the Protestant faith which they have defended. When the Diet of Spires, in 1529, took a reactionary position, he had a hand in the framing of that memorable protest, which gave to the reformers the name of Protestants, a name that has been perpetuated until the

present. He had a controversy with Zwingli, and as they sat at the table discussing the Lord's Supper, the stubborn German chalked down, "*This is my body*," and insisted upon his view of the sacrament, consubstantiation, as against the papal transubstantiation, and as against the more spiritual view of the Swiss reformer, who with his simple memorial idea has gained the day with the Protestant public.

When again in 1530 that summary of the Reformed Faith known as the Augsburg Confession was made, Luther was the ruling spirit in the result reached, though he did not dare go any nearer than Coburg Castle. There, three hours daily, he prayed for his brethren at Augsburg, between whom and himself there was constant communication. He believed that all would come out right, and he could and did write jocosely of the birds about his castle holding an "imperial diet," and planning a crusade against the wheat and barley and other fruits of the land, and he admired the beautiful palace in which they met, with the sky for its roof, and with green meadows and leafy trees for its floor. His cheerful confidence in the final issue was justified, for there followed the Protestant League of German princes, and the Reformation moved on to greater and greater success.

We will conclude by noting Luther's domestic life and closing days. He had married in 1525 an escaped nun, Catherine von Bora, in whose society he took great delight, calling her playfully his "Doctress Katy." His affection for her is indicated by the fact that he called the epistle to the Galatians, which was his favorite, his "Catherine von Bora." She bore him six children whom he passionately loved, and who made his home a paradise. From Coburg Castle he wrote a charming letter to his firstborn, a boy of fourteen, to whom he thus pictured heaven: "I know of a pretty garden where merry children run about that wear little golden coats, and gather nice apples and pears and cherries and plums under the trees, and sing and dance, and ride on pretty horses with gold bridles and silver saddles." The reformer, though so great, took a deep interest in his children. He would tell proudly of his little Margaret singing hymns at the age of four. When a favorite daughter was dying, at fourteen, broken-hearted he said to her, "Lena, dear, my little daughter, thou wouldst love to remain here with thy father; art thou willing to go to that other Father?" "Yes, dear father," she answered, "just as God wills." He knelt by her bed, and wept bitterly, and when she died it was in his arms. Gazing

into the coffin he said, "My darling Lena, thou wilt rise again and shine like a star—yea, as the sun." He was faithful in the training of his household, repeating every morning with his children the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and a psalm, and when they died he was confident of a glad reunion.

And by and by, in 1546, he too went hence. He had gone to Eisleben, where he caught a hard cold which terminated fatally. He died where he was born, assuring weeping friends that he died joyfully in the faith he had preached. His body was borne back to his sorrowing Catherine, and he was buried at Wittenberg, mourned by thousands. When Huss, whose name in Bohemian means goose, was condemned to death, he said in reference to the scornful gibes at his name, that he might be a "poor, tame fowl," but that in the future there would spring up a rarer bird than himself. He is said to have predicted that the song of a swan would rise from his ashes. At any rate, Luther has well been termed the "Swan of Eisleben," where he passed away triumphantly. He, so to speak, died singing. Though he had a certain roughness at times, yet, a lover of nature and children and a composer of Christian hymns as he was, there is

also a charming softness to his character, and we can adopt Carlyle's characterization of him: "Unsubduable granite, piercing far and wide into the heavens, yet in the clefts of it fountains, green, beautiful valleys with flowers!"

Such was one of those manifestly "providential men" constantly being raised up to keep the good cause ever moving forward. And there has been on the part of Christianity this steady advance without any real retrogression, when a view that sweeps the centuries is taken. The progress has been like that of the incoming tide. With reference to that we sometimes sit down and watch the little backward currents that recede on the sands, forgetting that while there is this constant ebbing the great flood keeps moving up the beach. The tide itself, once started, never stops till it reaches high-water mark, till it breaks in magnificent billows high upon the shore. Like that, Christianity is advancing. There may be now and then receding undercurrents, but above these is the grand tidal wave, the main movement of the water, rushing on with increasing volume and force and intensity; and it shall roll on and upward, till the mighty mass washes the shining shore in the silver tide of heaven. Each century the religious

high-water mark is placed a little higher. Occasionally an unbeliever is foolish enough to act in sober earnest the part which was only played by England's ancient king, Canute, who sat on the seashore at Southampton, and pretended to order the tide to move backward, but who had himself to move on and up the beach, or be engulfed by the advancing flood. None can stay the oceanic tide of a steadily progressing Christianity.

"On such a full sea are we now afloat."

THE SPANISH ARMADA: SECURITY AGAINST HOSTILE FLEETS

"Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them."
—EXODUS 15 : 10.

"But there the Lord will be with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers and streams ; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby."—ISAIAH 33 : 21.

XV

THE SPANISH ARMADA: SECURITY AGAINST HOSTILE FLEETS

In the summer of 1588 occurred the defeat of the Spanish Armada, the scattering of the so-called "invincible" fleet sent by Spain for the overthrow of England, and by Catholicism for the annihilation of Protestantism. This crisis in the political and religious history of the world is worth considering as illustrating the truth of an overruling Providence in the affairs of men.

The situation was one of great alarm. Spain, now feeble and without influence, was then the leading power of the globe. Her navy was the finest that sailed the seas, and gained undying fame in a marvelous record of discovery whereby, through Columbus and others, a new world was brought to light. But this luster has been repeatedly tarnished by defeat after defeat, like that at Trafalgar, when Nelson signaled, "England expects every man to do his duty," and immortalized himself by triumphing over the combined

fleets of both France and Spain, until now Britain is mistress of the oceans, and several other nations have a greater naval strength than Spain.

At the time of which we are speaking, however, she stood at the head of the procession in navigation of the seas. She had rich possessions in Africa, and the new continent discovered by Columbus was almost wholly hers, so that she received vast revenues from Mexico, South America, and the isles of the sea. Nearly all Europe, too, was at her feet, and she sent her armies to rule the Netherlands. There the greatest military genius of the age was trying in the year 1588 to reestablish over the sturdy Dutch a supremacy against which there had been a revolt. Philip II was the king who thus presumed to lord it over all the continental powers. With France torn by dissension, England seemed the only obstacle to the realization of his dreams for universal dominion. All else favored his unbridled ambition, even to the general religious condition.

Philip II championed the cause of the Holy Catholic Church, in favor of which a reaction had begun. Protestantism, after the first flush of success, was losing ground. It had been extirpated in Spain and Italy. It had lost half of Germany, its original stronghold. Philip

saw the way the tide seemed to be going, and he aspired to place himself at the head of the tidal wave. His idea was to reunite, says Hume, "the whole Christian world in the Catholic communion." The one thing which seemed to make this bold project impossible of execution was England. Philip felt that England could be conquered, and to this task he addressed himself. He sent reinforcements to his famous general in Holland, who at the proper moment was to join his command with the naval force of Spain, as the latter sailed up the British channel.

This fleet was to be the main factor in the struggle, and accordingly great efforts were made to bring it to its best. It was already the most powerful in the world, for the British navy had not yet become illustrious. For three years, in every Spanish port shipbuilding was the most active industry, and at length the Invincible Armada, which had been the talk of all Europe, was ready to sail forth on its crusade. There was a perfect furor of excitement throughout the Continent. Most of the prominent Catholic princes enlisted in the cause, which was to terminate so gloriously. The Pope himself promised financial support, granted plenary indulgences to all who would embark upon the sacred voyage, and excommu-

nicated the English queen, Elizabeth, absolving her subjects from their oaths of allegiance.

The Protestants everywhere watched the course of events with fear and trembling, but, because of the general retrogression of their cause, they were too weak and disheartened to lift a helping hand for their rights and liberties. They could only watch and pray, as the storm slowly gathered. Hallam in his "Constitutional History" refers to the crisis as the "agony of the Protestant faith and English name." Both these were threatened with extinction, and, says the same high authority, "Europe stood by in fearful suspense to behold what should be the result" from this combination of "the craft of Rome, the power of Philip, the genius of Farnese." Pope, king and general were of one mind.

So far as the cause of civil and religious liberty could be represented by any one nation, it was at that time centered in the English. They were the head and front of a progressive as against a medieval civilization, and they were, as Isaiah says, surrounded by "broad rivers and streams." They inhabited an island whose every side was washed by old ocean. It was a terrible emergency, which must have tried the faith of the strongest, as the splendid Armada prepared to sweep victoriously up the

English channel, while an immense flotilla of flat-bottomed boats was to convey the cavalry and infantry of Europe's most successful general from the Holland shore to a junction with the Spanish fleet, and the united land and naval forces were at one blow to annihilate the stronghold of Protestantism. The whole subsequent history of the world was to be determined then and there. It was to be decided whether an enlightened civilization and a pure Christianity, or intellectual thraldom and religious superstition, should control the future. There never was a more tremendous issue at stake. Which was to be victorious, God or the Spanish Armada?

Queen Elizabeth saw the importance of the contest, and nerved herself for a life and death struggle. She made her appeal, to quote her very language, in the name of "country, liberty, wives, children, lands, lives, and, which was specially to be regarded, the profession of the true and sincere religion of Christ." And when her faithful subjects came together, she rode horseback among them, and encouraged them to deeds of valor, and expressed her willingness, if it were necessary, to march in person before them against the foe. The navy as well as the army was put in readiness for the conflict, and such was the loyal enthusiasm

that private citizens of wealth built and manned ships at their own expense, and even liberal Catholics, who did not believe in Continental aggression upon their country, enlisted for God and home and native land under Lord Howard, with Drake as his most illustrious subordinate.

And now the Invincible Armada, as the fleet was proudly called by her friends, set sail from the Spanish coast. She, however, was driven into port by a storm, and it was reported in England that the enterprise had failed. But after repairs she started forth again, with the sympathies of the whole Catholic world, outside of Great Britain, and having on board troops that had never known defeat and that had the confidence which fanatics always have in a wild crusade. In the meantime, the English began to doubt if the Armada would come, when, on a July day toward evening, a ship with sails all set came flying before the wind, and, hastening into the harbor, the Scotch skipper announced the approach of the Spanish fleet which he had seen that very morning. Macaulay, inspired to a poetic strain and breaking away from his usual historic prose, paints the graphic scene as follows:

"It was about the lovely close
Of a warm summer day,
There came a gallant merchant-ship
Full sail to Plymouth Bay;

Her crew had seen Castile's black fleet,
Beyond Aurigny's isle,
At earliest twilight, on the waves,
Lie heaving many a mile."

At the alarming intelligence, soon all was commotion with swaying masts, clanging bells, bugle-note, and drum-beat, while beacon lights (the old substitute for flashing telegraphic messages) were kindled to send on the news from hilltop to hilltop.

"Far on the deep the Spaniard saw,
Along each southern shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range,
Those twinkling points of fire."

To London itself, the capital, the tidings flew that dreadful night.

"Then bugle's note and cannon's roar
The deathlike silence broke,
And with one start, and with one cry,
The royal city woke.
At once on all her stately gates
Arose the answering fires;
At once the wild alarum clashed
From all her reeling spires;

. . . . . .

"And from the farthest wards was heard
The rush of hurrying feet,
And the broad stream of pikes and flags
Rushed down each roaring street;
And broader still became the blaze,
And louder still the din,
As fast from every village round
The horse came spurring in."

Thus, on the double-quick from every quarter, does the historian, inspired to a poetic strain, represent the English as rallying; and there is no passage of Scripture which they might have appropriated as more happily expressing their hope and confidence than this from Isaiah: "The Lord will be with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby."

The British fleet lay at anchor, and at last the great Armada hove in sight. The lofty masts, the swelling sails, the towering prows, presented an imposing spectacle. On she came, a thing of beauty, the splendid fleet being in the form of an immense crescent, which measured seven miles from horn to horn. Up the English channel she grandly moved, passed the point where lay the British ships, which immediately wheeled in on the rear, and maintained a running fight, while the Armada was slowly making for a junction with the land forces under the general in the Netherlands.

For a week the skirmishing went on. Then came the crisis. The last Sunday of July, 1588, was made a day of prayer all over Elizabeth's realm. At two o'clock Monday morning, July 29th, eight mysterious ships from the British fleet moved out toward the formidable

Armada with her more than one hundred and thirty vessels. Were they deserting the English? Were they coming to propose terms of surrender? Soon the secret was disclosed, for they were fire-ships. Filled with combustibles, they burst into flame as they drove full head upon the beautiful crescent form; and the Spanish fleet, panic-stricken, cut their cables, and sped away in great confusion. The little English ships, which were not nearly so large as the Spanish, darted hither and thither, striking here and there, and getting away each time before the clumsy, unwieldy Armada could become adjusted to the new position, till the great crescent creature, worried and harassed, made for the northern seas, hoping to round the north of Scotland and thus to return to Spain.

But, as she fled northward, Providence swept in with a terrific tempest to complete the ruin, and not half of the vessels ever reached home, many being wrecked along the Scottish and Irish shores. A mere remnant of the proud Armada, after the lapse of weeks, reached Spain to tell the story of the disaster. Thus ended a battle so important in its historic bearings, that Creasy puts it among "the fifteen decisive battles of the world," and it may well be numbered among "those few battles, of

which," says Hallam, "a contrary event would have essentially varied the drama of the world in all its subsequent scenes."

And never was a victory gained of which it could be said more truly in the language of Scripture, that the battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift. On the one side was the most powerful monarch of the age, who dominated the politics of all Europe, and whose empire was colossal in extent, for Spain, and not England, was then the leading nation in the federation of the world and in the parliament of powers. On the same side was the greatest general of the century, the Duke of Parma, while substantially the whole Catholic world was enthusiastic in carrying the enterprise to a successful issue. On the other side was a little island which had not yet risen to its magnificent later fame, which had no well-equipped army flushed with success like the Spanish. Besides, the Protestantism of the Continent was too weak from frequent defeat to furnish any assistance other than sympathy. Then, when it came to the immediate agencies by which the battle was fought, the British fleet was so manifestly inferior to the Armada, both in numbers and in construction, that the ships of the former never once ventured to join with the monster vessels of the latter in a

square and out-and-out contest, but recourse was had to the tactics of harassing the enemy from a distance and of surprises on this side and on that. It was a kind of guerrilla warfare by sea. Opportune moments had to be chosen, and strategic movements had to be adopted, and it could never be told beforehand what the result would be.

In short, the English did the best they could with their great disadvantages, and then trusted, some would say, to luck, but the more reverent would say, to Providence; and most grandly did Providence guide the desultory attacks, till the great Armada, the admiration of the world, fled, defeated, northward, there to experience more directly the frown of Providence in the terrible storm which completed the ruin. It was a signal instance of divine intervention in human affairs, and the medal struck to commemorate the event very fittingly bore the Scriptural words, "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them."

God surely is in history, working out his purpose. He is always present in emergencies to shape the result, and to give triumph to those who more particularly stand for humane and progressive and Christian ideas, to help the side which contains the forces that

are to lift mankind nearer heaven, and that are to speed the human race on toward the millennial era which is promised. This one marked case of divine intervention should strengthen our faith in the fact of an overruling Providence. The situation was really desperate. "Let not a god intervene," said Horace, the Latin poet, "unless there be a knot worth his untying." Such a knot the historic circumstances which we have been considering constituted. But the knot was untied, because the supreme Arbiter of national destinies addressed himself to the task. He made a quick end of the formidable opposition to the Protestant cause as represented in the English nation.

So summarily did he dispose of what had sorely perplexed and disturbed Elizabeth and her whole realm, that we are reminded of a classical incident connected with the capital of ancient Phrygia. When that country was politically unsettled, full of civil dissension, an oracle had informed the people who were gathered together, that a wagon would bring them a ruler. Directly a poor peasant named Gordius came driving to the assembly. Of natural dignity and manly demeanor, he was at once acknowledged as king, and he dedicated the vehicle, which had brought him such

good fortune, to the god Zeus as a thank-offering. The pole of the rude conveyance was fastened to the yoke by an intricate knot of bark, and the story was that whosoever should untie this knot would become master of Asia. Alexander the Great in his march eastward drew his sword and speedily severed the knot of Gordius, and hence the common saying ever since of "cutting the Gordian knot" to express a summary way of disposing of a difficulty. Such short work did the God of heaven make of the knot to be untied when the Spanish Armada threatened his cause with disaster. He cut the Gordian knot, he sent a storm to hasten the defeat of his enemies, and the divine character of the victory is universally recognized.

THE EDICT OF NANTES: THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

"They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid."—MICAH 4 : 4.

XVI

THE EDICT OF NANTES: THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

We need occasionally to see what the broad movements of divine Providence have been. We should trace the course of God's people not only through the Old Testament period and the New Testament, but also through subsequent times. We should remember that the Acts of the Apostles have been reproduced to a greater or less degree in every century of the Christian era. God did not die with the birth and establishment of Christianity. He has been accomplishing his purpose through all the nineteen centuries of the Spirit's special dispensation. A chapter from the history of the Christian Church here and there tends to broaden our minds, and at the same time makes us estimate more highly the blessings which are ours above those of previous ages. One point in which we are greatly favored is in the matter of freedom of worship, and we sometimes forget the struggle there has been to attain the felicity pictured by the prophet:

"They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid."

That is quite a different prophecy from the one uttered by Christ, when he said, "They shall deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake." We are living in the dispensation of freedom of worship; we sit under our vine and fig-tree with none to molest. But multitudes have been fated to pass their years under another condition of things, of persecution for conscience' sake. We need to review the tragic facts once in a while, that we may appreciate how highly favored we are in these days. We need to consider what the saints of the past have endured, that there may be stirred within our hearts gratitude for the privileges we enjoy. October 18, 1685, occurred the historic revocation of the famous Edict of Nantes, around which we are now to let our thoughts revolve.

We start a century earlier than this date. France was divided between Romanists and Huguenots. The latter had been made to suffer bitter persecutions from the former. Catherine de Medici, the queen mother, after many failures to extirpate heresy by overt acts of cruelty, had resolved to try a new plan.

She would be very gracious, and she knew how to be. Shakespeare says that one can "smile and smile, and be a villain," but the French Protestants had not yet learned that Catherine could do so. They responded to her overtures as she proposed to unite the two parties by a distinguished marriage.

Henry of Navarre was a Huguenot prince. He had been brought up in the country, nourished on plain diet, and had been allowed to play bareheaded and barefooted with the children of humble peasants. Still, royal blood flowed in his veins, and he grew up to be a youth of engaging manners and of brilliant parts. Catherine had a daughter, Margaret, sister of the young king, Charles IX. The princess was a Catholic, and why should not she and the Protestant prince of Navarre join hand and heart in a wedlock which would also harmonize religious differences? Catherine decided that it should be so, and young people in those times had no alternative but to submit to their superiors.

The wedding-day was appointed, and the Huguenots crowded into Paris to witness the auspicious event which was to terminate all their troubles, and give them equal liberty with the Romanists. August 18, 1572, was the day of the joyous nuptials. In the pres-

ence of assembled thousands the ceremony occurred. Margaret, who loved another and who had all along remonstrated against the union, was asked if she would take Henry for her husband. She stood sullenly silent, but her brother the king, close behind her, with his hand forced her head forward in an apparent assent. This little embarrassment did not seriously interfere with the program, for the whole thing was a matter of state policy, and the occasion, therefore, was regarded a most happy one. The Huguenots especially rejoiced, for they would be no more persecuted. They would henceforth be permitted to worship in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences.

Catherine smiled, and remarked in confidence, "The cautious fish have taken the bait." Only the first scene of the tragedy she had prepared was as yet enacted. The second scene followed in five days. Never before had so many Protestants been massed together unarmed. It was the fair plotter's opportunity; she could destroy them at one blow. St. Bartholomew's day was selected for the execution of her plot. At midnight a pistol shot was heard in Paris from the royal palace. The tocsin was sounded by a church bell, that of the St. Germain L'Auxerrois, which

because of this is pointed out to every tourist by the guides. The signal was understood by the previously instructed murderers, who rushed forth to the carnage.

"Slay to the last, and let not one escape," shouted the leaders. The purest and the most eminent Huguenot, Admiral Coligny, was among the first to be killed. As the assassins broke into his chamber, he rose from his bed and calmly kneeled in prayer. He was stabbed to the heart and his body flung out of the window, where it fell with a heavy thud at the feet of the Duke of Guise, into whose face the warm blood spurted. When by the light of a torch the duke stooped to see if it really was the desired and expected victim, he showed his satisfaction by giving the corpse a brutal kick. He commanded the head to be cut off and to be sent as a trophy to Catherine. The decapitated body was dragged through the streets, was thrown into the river, and later was hung on a gibbet till its decomposition became offensive to all except to young King Charles, who said: "The carcass of an enemy always smells pleasantly." He himself from a window had shot down the flying wretches, when they came within the range of his musket.

For three days and nights the massacre continued. The streets of Paris ran with human

blood. Couriers were despatched throughout France, until thousands upon thousands of innocent lives were taken by the movement thus inaugurated. One monster alone could afterward boast: "This arm," and he proudly bared it, "on the day of St. Bartholomew put to death four hundred heretics."

Protestant Europe was frozen with horror at the terrible tidings. Queen Elizabeth of England and her court put on mourning. On the contrary, Philip II, of Spain, whose infamous Duke of Alva perpetrated equally atrocious crimes in the Netherlands,—this heartless Spanish monarch sent his congratulations to Charles IX, exchanged words of felicitation with his courtiers, ordered the Te Deum to be chanted, and for the first and only time in his life laughed aloud. At Rome a special service was held at St. Peter's to render devout thanksgiving for the good news. Cannon thundered, bonfires blazed, and shouting processions marched through the streets of the Eternal City. Pope Gregory XIII, to commemorate the happy event, had a medal struck with his image on one side, while on the other was a representation of a destroying angel striking down the Huguenots, together with the Latin inscription, *Huguenotorum Strages*, 1572—"The slaughter of the Huguenots."

The king, without whose order the massacre could never have occurred, was visited, it would seem, with the divine judgment. About a week after the tragedy, one midnight he sprang from his bed, and declared to his frightened attendants that he had heard shrieks and groans and piteous wailings, exactly like those of St. Bartholomew's day. He was haunted constantly by these phantom voices of agony. He became more and more gloomy and wretched. "Sleeping or waking," he once said to his physician, "the murdered Huguenots seem ever present to my eyes, with ghastly faces, and weltering in their blood." Within two years he died of remorse, and, says the historian, his body was "bathed in a bloody sweat, which oozed from every pore."

The Huguenots came unsuspiciously to the wedding at Paris, expecting an end to persecution in the happy union of Protestant prince and Catholic princess, but they were basely betrayed to their death. It was not yet theirs to worship under their own vine and fig-tree, with none to make afraid. Such is our privilege, and how thankful we should be that we are not called upon to suffer as did those of whom we are being reminded! In the Huguenots was fulfilled the prediction of Christ, that his disciples should be killed. In us, to-day,

Micah's prophecy is realized, that we should worship unmolested and in our own way.

We come now to another scene in the unfolding drama, to the war of the three Henrys out of which, after varying fortunes, came the Edict of Nantes. The Bartholomew massacre did not, as was hoped, exterminate Protestantism. The struggle was renewed. The Catholic League was formed, headed by Henry of Guise, who at first united with the royalists led by King Henry III. The two moved to the overthrow of the Huguenots under Henry of Navarre, whose beard at the trying crisis, says one historian, "became white in a night." But the Huguenot hero bore up magnificently, and lived to see his two powerful enemies arrayed against each other, until Henry the king had Henry the duke murdered, while a disdainful kick administered by royalty to the corpse was only repeating the insult which the dead man himself in life had offered to Admiral Coligny a few years before. Then, in the changed circumstances, the king deserted the League and made an alliance with Navarre, only to be assassinated with Jesuitical sanction by one of those he had recently served, and the Huguenot leader was left alone to fight his way to the throne which was now his by inheritance.

He gained victory after victory. He marched through France, subduing town after town. His dash and confidence captivated everybody. In private life he met with many sad defeats from sin, but in a military sense he was invincible. It was on the plain of Ivry where he won his proudest laurels. That was in 1590, but we can still see the historic white plume waving triumphantly, as his brave ten thousand advanced to meet sixteen thousand. He first knelt in prayer with his followers, and then he addressed them in the memorable words which still have thrilling power: "If the standard fail you, keep my plume in your eyes; you will always find it in the path of honor and duty." As his triple white plume, nodding from lofty helmet, appeared from time to time, when the smoke of battle temporarily lifted, a shout of victory went up, because this original "plumed knight" was thus shown to be always at the front and in the thickest of the fight, where he remained till the enemy was defeated and the triumph was complete.

With this decisive battle the cause of the Huguenots seemed on the ascendent, when ambition got the better of principle in the brilliant Henry of Navarre. For the sake of peace, as a matter of policy, he abjured Protestantism, which he favored from intellectual

conviction and not from a regenerated heart. He professedly espoused Catholicism, and with little opposition took the throne as Henry IV. He reigned wisely and generously. He it was who wished his poorest subject to be able to have a fat fowl for every Sunday's dinner. His most lasting renown, however, comes from his improvement of the condition of the hitherto oppressed Huguenots. Even after he became outwardly a Romanist, he signed, in April of 1598, the celebrated Edict of Nantes, which gave them the right to worship God in accordance with their individual preferences.

There were fanatics who did not approve of this guarantee of religious freedom, but he remained firm in his purpose; he did not again lower the white plume. For his friendliness to the cause of liberty of conscience he was finally made to pay the penalty in a violent death in 1610 from the dagger of a bigot who sprang into the royal carriage, and struck down the plumed knight of our story. He had, however, fought the cause of the Huguenots through to success in the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes, that second *magna charta* of the liberties which we at present enjoy. Let us not forget at what a cost freedom of worship was purchased. We worship under our

own vine and fig-tree with none to make afraid because of determined wars waged around this Edict by faithful and heroic ancestors. We sit and quietly worship in our pleasant sanctuaries because of these struggles and victories in the past.

Once more the curtain rises in the hurrying of our drama to its close. The first was a marriage scene, the second was a scene of tragedy in the never-to-be-forgotten massacre, and the third was a scene of victory with the white plume in the foreground. Lastly, there comes disaster in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, while yet its essential principle subsequently prevailed and is to-day everywhere regnant.

Under Louis XIII, the iron hand of his great minister of state, the immortal Richelieu, in the siege and capture of Rochelle, wrested all political power from the Huguenots, who in yielding up their last stronghold became the more exposed to religious tyranny. Still they were not made to suffer materially for conscience' sake till the next reign. It was under Louis XIV that they were deprived of one right after another, until all semblance of legal protection was withdrawn in the formal revocation of the famed edict on October 18, 1685. Henceforth all Protestant meetings were un-

lawful. In the home, even, parents were not allowed to teach their own children the reformed religion.

Persecution became so severe that there began one of the most marvelous movements in history. The people left the country by the hundred thousand. But this was prohibited. Soldiers guarded the frontier, and shot down the fugitives at sight. Or the poor hunted creatures, if women, were imprisoned for life; and, if men, were condemned to the galleys. They were subjected to all manner of indignities, and to the most exquisite refinements of torture, the endeavor being to cause the longest possible suffering of which a human being is capable. Thus pursued with a relentless cruelty, the Huguenots, in spite of the line of soldiers along the frontier, in spite of this military cordon, escaped into Germany and Switzerland and Holland and England and Sweden. France was drained of her best citizens, to the number, it is claimed, of three hundred thousand. Her industrial interests were thus prostrated in the departure of numerous skilled artisans, who benefited other countries.

The moral effects culminated, as most writers admit, a century later in the destructive French Revolution. With the immense emigration of the better elements, resulting from the revo-

cation of the Edict of Nantes, there was not left character enough to prevent that outburst of godlessness and immorality, which brought chaos and anarchy and disaster.

But this high-handed annulling of religious freedom by Louis XIV who prided himself on his arbitrary power, who said with a sublime audacity, "I am the State"—this unjust exercise of authority did not last forever. The grand monarch, who liked to be thought tall and imposing, in due season was humbled by death like any other mortal. Macaulay well says of him: "In the grave, the most majestic of princes is only five feet eight." For a while he caused great distress to God's people, who, however, carried their principles to every Protestant country of Europe, and ultimately to America, and we are experiencing the benefits of the expatriation. No inconsiderable portion of our better American population is of Huguenot extraction. Paul Revere, who by his historic midnight ride in 1775 roused the colonial inhabitants from Charlestown to Lexington and Concord to resist the British soldiers at the beginning of our Revolutionary War for national independence, was a Huguenot by descent. So was Peter Faneuil, who gave to Boston Faneuil Hall, that cradle of American liberty so lovingly preserved in our day be-

cause of having been the place of many patriotic gatherings in the history of our country. These noble men, and others like them, had the blood of freedom flowing through their veins from previous generations. Not only has America benefited from the French expulsion of the Huguenots two centuries ago, but so has Germany; for when, in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 the Germans marched victoriously to the heart of France and besieged and took Paris, among the leading officers of the army thus triumphing were some who had descended from the hitherto expelled Frenchmen; so completely does divine providence in the course of time right injustice. "Not less than eighty of the emperor's staff, high in place and power," says a clergyman of repute, "were children of the expelled Huguenots." And in the growth of the spirit of liberty France herself has now freedom of worship, and nearly everywhere persecution has ceased. The Edict of Nantes has become well-nigh universally operative. Though revoked something over two hundred years ago, it gradually came into force again, until we are blessed with its benign influence, in that we gather freely for worship in our holy temples, with none to molest. To the Huguenots we are largely indebted for this great blessing, and as they were Calvinists we

have been having a chapter from history to the glory of Presbyterianism. In connection with this fruitage of the Reformation we think more especially of John Knox, who with his staunch Protestantism made Catholic Mary, the fascinating queen of Scots, weep in Holyrood Palace. We recall England and more particularly London with its famous Abbey in whose Jerusalem Chamber sat and deliberated not only those who gave us the King James translation of the Bible, and their successors who gave us the Revised Version of the Scriptures, but also those celebrated divines who there gathered in 1643 and in five years and a half completed what are known as the Presbyterian Standards, the immortal Westminster Confession of Faith, together with the longer and shorter catechisms. And yet the great theologian of this branch of the Reformed Church was John Calvin, who, notwithstanding that he shared the limitations of his age, was an intellectual and moral and spiritual giant, producing, as he did, his matchless "Institutes" at the early age of twenty-six, and being, as he was, the inspiring genius of the French Reformation which we have been considering in the experiences of the Huguenots, and honored, as he still is, by Presbyterianism in all its various divisions. Because of what the

French Calvinists, the Presbyterian Huguenots, suffered, and because of the ultimate victory which they gained in revolutionizing public sentiment as to the right of religious liberty, we to-day sit without a fear under our own vines and fig-trees.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS THE DISCOVERER OF AMERICA

"I will go on by you unto Spain."—ROM. 15 : 28.

"He went out, not knowing whither he went."—HEB. 11 : 8.

XVII

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS THE DISCOVERER OF AMERICA

ABRAHAM left the seat of Oriental civilization in the valley of the Euphrates, and started toward the Occident. He did not know his exact destination, but he went in faith, believing that, as Bishop Berkeley in modern times has said, "Westward the course of empire takes its way." The patriarch found his west in Palestine, which after a resplendent history fell into decay until Paul in his day felt that the hope of the future lay elsewhere than in that effete country whose glory had departed, and he went west, carrying Christianity to Europe, and longing to go to its most western land, namely, Spain. Whether he ever reached that country is uncertain, but it was very early maintained that he did. At any rate, Christian civilization, which he started westward, did get there.

From Spain began another movement toward the setting sun, and this culminated in the discovery of America. Now that the Cas-

tilian government, by a brilliant campaign of one hundred days on the part of the United States, has been forever driven from the western hemisphere, we may appropriately consider how these Occidental possessions became Spain's four centuries ago. Christopher Columbus was the providential agent for the opening up of the new world, where the cause of civil and religious liberty was destined to have its highest development. His magnificent achievement would seem to have been because of the divine guidance.

It seems incredible that a little over four hundred years ago civilized man was ignorant of the existence of America. To be sure, the discovery of this country was originally made by the Scandinavians about the year 1000 of our era, but practically 1492 marks the real date of the continent's disclosure, when Columbus found the new world. It was his explorations which permanently opened up the Americas to thronging thousands. Hitherto, these vast continental regions with their innumerable islands had slept for the most part in the sublime silence of nature. The forests were vocal with feathered songsters, the glens echoed with silver cascades, the shores were cannonaded as they had been for centuries by the billowy deep, the plains trembled beneath

the tread of herds of buffalo, the summer air was full of the hum of countless insects, the stillness was broken by the voices of a few natives who roamed here and there, but after all there was not the noise of diversified human industry. Harbors were not filled with ships carrying the products of the globe hither and thither. There were no great cities whose pavements roared with the roll of immense traffic.

How came what is now such a busy scene of life and commerce to be brought out of the oblivion of hundreds and thousands of years? It was the outcome of the commendable faith of one remarkable man, who was destined to accomplish, says Prescott, "results more stupendous than those which heaven has permitted any other mortal to achieve." Lamartine says, "We know of none more perfect," and, while this is excessive praise, even the judicial Guizot refers admiringly to "the indomitable genius and religious faith" of the subject of our sketch.

He probably was of Genoese nativity, though in view of the distinction to which he subsequently attained, no less than sixteen Italian towns have each claimed to be his birthplace. We are reminded of what is said of the blind bard of ancient Greece:

"Seven cities claimed the Homer dead,
In which the living Homer begged his bread."

Columbus was from boyhood religiously inclined. Geography, navigation and astronomy were his favorite studies. At the early age of fourteen he was committed to a seafaring life. He changed his place of residence to Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, which was the great maritime power of the day. In his various naval expeditions truth compels us to say that he was virtually a pirate, though piracy then was by many considered a legitimate occupation, the high seas with all they contained or bore being regarded as common property, there being no nice sense of international honor as at present. Marrying a Portuguese wife he seems in a measure to have abandoned his piratical cruises over the ocean, and on land to have given himself to the making of charts and maps.

In studying these he was struck with the great vacant space in the Atlantic, and he sometimes wondered if there must not be a balancing continent on that side of the earth in whose sphericity he had come to believe. The globular form of this planet had been taught by Pythagoras in Italy as early as the sixth century before Christ, and had been learned from this source by Plato and Aris-

totle and the Greeks, who transmitted the knowledge again to the Romans, while these in turn convinced some of the medieval scholars; and yet in the fifteenth century Columbus was only one of a comparatively few who held to the spherical shape of the earth. He thought accordingly that in sailing due west he would strike, if not Asia in its extension, at least, says the critical Winsor, "other lands westerly quite as desirable to discover."

He had visions, if not of new continents, of undiscovered portions of land that was old. He dreamed of finding for the modern world the Biblical Ophir of ancient fame, the rich country whence Solomon derived gold in such abundance. Besides, mariners who had gone farthest beyond the Azores, those far-away islands, told strange stories of drifting branches of trees, of pieces of carved wood, of canoes consisting of single huge pines simply hollowed out, of tangled and tropical vegetation, of floating corpses of copper-colored and hitherto unknown men. Columbus believed that these came from Asia, or possibly from some totally undiscovered region. But who would venture forth to see?

To the general mind the vast intervening expanse of water was associated with mystery and dread. Some thought there were bottom-

less abysses, into which the waters of all oceans plunged over terrible cataracts. Others imagined a slope to the Atlantic, from which there could be no recovery when ships once got started on the watery down grade; there could be no return to Europe up the steep declivity. Still others, in their ignorance of how gravity acts, gravely argued that vessels reaching the other side of the alleged globe would fall from the earth down through eternal space.

In spite of all these objections and obstacles, Columbus was eager to go forth, he knew not where, in search of a new world, or of an old world by a new route. He felt called of God to this enterprise. He tried to interest the adventurous and educated king of Portugal in the project, but a convened council of learned men pronounced his ideas chimerical. Failing in his negotiations with the Portuguese government, and becoming involved in debts, as is supposed, he fled the country. He made his way into Spain, but Ferdinand and Isabella, the Spanish sovereigns, had other matters to engross their attention.

They were busy establishing the Inquisition to stamp out heresy and all deviation from the Catholic faith, in accordance with the persecuting ideas of the time. They were pecunia-

rily crippled also by the necessity of granting governmental aid to portions of their realm devastated by the plague. Moreover, they reigned at a period of great financial stringency because of a depreciated currency. And particularly did their conflict with the Moors tax to the utmost the royal resources, for they carried to a triumphant close a struggle that had lasted for nearly eight hundred years. They finally saw the crescent go down, while the cross was planted in its place on the highest tower of the splendid Alhambra, whose ruins, even, are to-day beautiful to behold, the admiration of all travelers. When Columbus secured an interview with the rulers who were so much occupied, "he felt himself kindled as with a fire from on high," to quote his own language, "and considered himself as an agent chosen by heaven to accomplish a great design."

But the general incredulity as to his fundamental position, that the earth was spherical, led to his being regarded as visionary. He contemplated returning permanently, as he did temporarily, to Portugal, whose king promised him immunity from all suits of a criminal or civil nature. He received an overture from Henry VII of England, where his brother Bartholomew had made known his plan, but he at last resolved to go to France. He set

out with his son Diego, begging his bread by the way, and trudging along on foot. He sought refreshment at a monastery, where he enlisted the interest of a friendly friar, who formerly had been confessor to the Spanish queen, and who despatched to her a messenger, and who himself in response was summoned into her presence. He spoke with such effect that the attendance of Columbus on the court was next commanded by the gracious Isabella at Granada. He arrived there in time to see the Alhambra pass forever from Moorish into Christian hands, and with much hope submitted his proposition.

Columbus proposed to enter upon the enterprise unfolded on condition of being made admiral and viceroy over all that he might discover, and on condition of being allowed one-tenth of the resulting revenues. His demands were pronounced excessive, and he retired with the full intention of negotiating with the French government. He mounted a mule and rode away, but some of his court friends set forth to the queen the small cost and the possibly large gain of accepting the navigator's terms, and, following their advice, Isabella had a swift herald intercept him in his journey, with the announcement that his stipulations would be met.

The resources of the government were not abundant after the very expensive war just closed, but Isabella felt that the requisite means would be forthcoming. It was in this emergency that Ferdinand was said to have demurred on account of the cost of the undertaking in the depleted condition of the treasury, and that her Majesty was said to have come to the rescue with the generous offer, "I will pawn my diamonds and jewels to meet the expenses of the expedition." Recent researches pronounce this incident in its literalness apocryphal, but there is no questioning the fact that the needed money was taken from the chest of the king only on the condition of its restoration, if such should be the royal wish, from the exchequer of the queen. The requisite funds were, therefore, to all intents and purposes, a loan from the monarch with his wife's resources as security, and she deserves all the credit that would have inhered in an actual pledging of her valuables.

There were still provoking delays, but on Friday, August 3, 1492, three small vessels with one hundred and twenty souls sailed forth, after prayers and tears, for Columbus was going he knew not where, except that he was going to seek a country with the belief that he was divinely guided. By faith he started

on that long and perilous voyage, when he was perhaps forty-six or forty-seven years old.

Following him on the ocean, his faith appears to a still greater advantage. He had to put into the Canaries for repairs, and there a volcanic island frightened the sailors, as it emitted fire which to their excited imaginations seemed to form a flaming sword, and only by scientific explanations could their fears be allayed by their intrepid leader, who talked to them and gave them the physical causes of an eruption. Then the magnetic needle began to deflect from the hitherto invariable north, and the superstitious mariners felt that even nature was turning against them. Though Columbus himself was inwardly disturbed by the variation, he remained outwardly calm, and because he could think of no other cause he solemnly attributed it to new stars revolving around the pole, and talked with such an air of wisdom, that his ignorant followers were again quieted.

On they glided over tranquil seas and under dreamy skies, and, to encourage them, there appeared the seaweed of an ocean that was apparently getting shallow. But no land was sighted, though more than once they were deceived by clouds which in the distance seemed like cliffs and mountains. They were

also cheered one evening by beautiful birds (which ordinarily nest in shrubs) warbling their songs among the masts with no sense of weariness as if from a long flight, and by sparrows (which make their homes around human abodes) being seen.

There succeeded tropical calms and strange currents, and though there was no wind the ocean seemed to heave as from submarine volcanoes. The sailors feared they were nearing the deep, dark abysses, into which all waters were fabled to pour with a rush and roar, when their attention was pleasantly diverted by a cry of land in sight. The seeming shore proved to be another illusion, and they rolled on as before over the monotonous deep, and Columbus himself was somewhat disheartened. In the midst of his anxiety the smallest vessel hoisted the signal of sighted land, and fired a gun to announce the tidings, but it turned out to be only another cloud bank. The navigator now changed his course and followed the birds in their flight, and after hope deferred had again made the heart sick, we read of his spirits reviving at the appearance of rushes recently torn up, a carved stick, a branch of hawthorn in blossom, and a broken bough with a bird's nest full of eggs upon which the mother was serenely sitting

and riding unconscious of danger over gently undulating waves.

Night, however, came on with no land in view. All were anxious, and none slept. They gazed through the darkness for some shore. At midnight Columbus, walking the deck and sweeping the horizon, fancied he saw a light rise and fall. He asked another to look, and still another, and both agreed with him that there surely was a flickering light in the distance. The three kept the secret to themselves, not wishing to stir false hopes, and by and by the light disappeared, and Columbus watched till two o'clock in the morning. He prayed as well as watched. Presently he heard a cannon-shot from one of the ships in advance of the other two, and he thanked God for the confident cry this time of "Land ahead!"

Sails were furled, and all waited anxiously for the break of day. There certainly was the sound of breakers on a beach, and there was the unmistakable scent of soil and woods near by, like "the smell of Lebanon." With the dawn arose to the sight an island from the sea, one of the Bahamas, with green forests of stately trees, with queer huts resembling beehives, with blue, curling smoke ascending on high, and with half-nude natives peering out from their hiding-places, and concluding that

the ships with swelling, breathing sails were things of life which had flown down on their white wings from the crystal skies to bring the sons of the gods in the finely-appareled and white-faced Europeans who seemed worthy of being worshiped. Columbus gazed at the fairylike scene, and then with an escort landed, on Friday, October 12, or October 21, new style. He fell on his knees, kissed the ground and wept tears of joy. He uttered a solemn and glad prayer, erected the cross and the flag of Spain, and took possession of the virgin soil in the name of his sovereigns and of his Saviour.

It is needless to speak of Cuba and the other islands which he discovered, islands of enchanting beauty, with birds of azure and purple plumage, with brilliant flowers of sweetest fragrance, with tropical fruits and with perfumes of spices, with "luminous insects" by night, until the great navigator said, "It is impossible to think of misery or death in such a place." It only remained to return and report; but terrific storms marked the voyage back, and Columbus, fully expecting to find a watery grave, wanted to preserve his splendid discovery. He wrote on parchment an account of the voyage, wrapped the precious document in waxed cloths, encased it in wood,

and committed it to the waves in the hope of its being washed ashore even if he perished. Another copy of his narrative he left in the vessel, to survive, possibly, his not unlikely drowning.

But he was providentially spared to see the country from which he had sailed, and straightway he and his followers proceeded to church to render devout thanksgiving to Almighty God. Then came that grand triumphal procession through Spain, with painted Indians the astonishment of all, with rare birds and plants and precious stones and golden ornaments borne conspicuously along. The king and queen rose from their throne to do honor to Columbus, while at the recital of truth that was stranger than fiction there flowed royal tears of satisfaction and pride, the Te Deum was chanted by the chapel choir, and to God there rose songs of praise in which both Ferdinand and Isabella joined. The triumph was complete; it was the victory of faith.

"By faith" Columbus "went out, not knowing whither he went," except that he was seeking a country; and he was gloriously rewarded. He knew not whither he went, for to his dying day he supposed that he had discovered the other side of India, and hence he called the

natives Indians. His expectation was not realized in seeing the inhabitants of this new world Christianized, and yet there was to arise on these shores a Christian nation more glorious than ever entered into his most glowing conceptions. The marvelous results of his faith we all do see.

After three more voyages the great navigator died on Spanish soil, May 20, 1506, about sixty years of age, according to the later date assigned for his birth. He was not perfect. He shared the moral debasement of his age, but he showed penitence in that he remembered in his will the Spanish woman who bore him his son Fernando, the bequest being accompanied by these words, "Let this be done for the discharge of my conscience, for it weighs heavy on my soul." He had an inordinate desire for gold, which allured him on from island to island; but there is this alleviating circumstance, that he intended to dedicate part of the wealth for which he sought to the recovery of Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre from the infidels whom the crusaders had not been able to conquer and dislodge.

He made slaves of the islanders, who at first gave him a warm welcome, but guns and bloodhounds soon made the friendly natives hostile, and there followed a long train of woes from

the cruel policy of human bondage which he inaugurated against the protest of the kindly Isabella. Here also we must bear in mind that he lived in the fifteenth century, and not in the nineteenth with its new light upon the sum of all villainies. He systematically prevaricated, reporting on his voyage the daily progress less than it actually was, giving as a reason in his journal, "that the crew might not be discouraged, if the voyage should prove too long." Shipwrecked on the northern coast of Jamaica, and not receiving needed supplies from the unfriendly islanders, and knowing from his astronomical information that an eclipse of the moon was soon to take place, on the night of February 29, 1504, he informed the natives that the Great Spirit was about to show his displeasure at their inhospitality by an obscuration of the moon, and since the eclipse came at the exact time he had named, they were greatly frightened, and promised him everything he wanted. Just before the satellite was to emerge from the shadow, he assured them that the removal of the divine wrath would presently be indicated by the clear shining again of the moon, and when the sign foretold did occur, his sway over them was complete; but it was gained by trickery not consistent with the highest character.

He was not deserving of the chains in which he was returned to Spain from his third voyage, but there was much misrule on his part in the new regions over which he had absolute dominion. And yet tyranny was not an uncommon vice in his age. He may have been unduly exalted by Prescott and Irving and others of the earlier writers, but he was better than his detractor, Justin Winsor, would have us think. A World's Fair in his honor in Chicago, an American city, just four hundred years after his great discovery, was eminently proper. He was one of those providential men of history, born to introduce a new and more splendid era than the past has known, to produce something grand for posterity. The Spanish Castelar well said, "America was discovered because Columbus possessed a living faith in his ideal, in himself, and in his God!"

His remains have had a singular history. His testamentary wish, to have the fetters with which he was shamefully loaded buried with him, may not have been met, but his further desire, to be laid to rest on an island which he had discovered, was carried out after he had slept for some years in Spanish soil. The government of Spain exhumed him and reburied him under the floor of the cathedral at San Domingo, where later were interred his

son Diego and a grandson Luis. But in 1795, France obtained by treaty from Spain the western portion of the island which contained the Columbian mausoleum. The Spaniards naturally wanted the body of their illustrious discoverer, and therefore the cathedral floor was lifted, a vault was found and opened, and a leaden box with the supposed remains of Columbus (though no inscription was noticed) was enclosed in a gilded sarcophagus, which on January 19, 1796, with great ceremony was conveyed to Havana, Cuba, and placed near the high altar of the cathedral there.

In 1877, during some repairs on the San Domingo cathedral, the two other Columbian graves were opened, and from the inscriptions and other evidence, such as the presence in one coffin of a musket ball—which very naturally may be thought to be the one the great navigator was known to have borne in his body during life because of a reference he once makes to his "wound breaking out afresh"—for reasons like this the belief prevails with good authorities (though some dissent), that the body of the son Diego was the one mistakenly removed to Cuba in 1796, while those left were the grandson Luis and Columbus himself. Thus, after all, it is thought that Columbus' body lies at San Domingo, never

really having been transferred to Havana. Recently the alleged remains at Havana, because of the American conquest of Cuba, have been conveyed across the sea to the mother country, whence the discoverer sailed more than four centuries since.

The Columbian monument erected in the Cuban city in 1822 would also seem to be misplaced, but that matters little, for the true memorial of Christopher Columbus is this whole double western continent of North and South America. If in St. Paul's cathedral of London, that architectural product of the massive brain of Sir Christopher Wren who designed the noble structure which required thirty-five years for its building,—if in that grand temple the worshiper can be told, "If you wish to see his monument, look around you" (*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*), much more can all Americans feel with reference to Columbus, that if they wish to see his monument they do not need to go to Spain or San Domingo or Havana or a Columbian Exposition, even; they have only to look around and see his enduring memorial in the mighty republic of the United States and in all the other nations that have grown to greatness in the new world which was discovered four hundred years ago.

THE PILGRIMS: THE COMING OF THE MAYFLOWER

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."—HEB. 11 : 13.

XVIII

THE PILGRIMS: THE COMING OF THE MAYFLOWER

FOREFATHERS' DAY, which commemorates the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock on December 21, 1620, is an anniversary that is being increasingly observed. The coming of the Mayflower will ever have for the human mind a romantic interest. In considering the movement which thus culminated, we are carried back, strictly speaking, to the apostolic age.

At the outset, it would seem, churches were voluntary associations of believers in different localities, with but little organization, and that democratic in nature, the entire congregation having a vote. That accounts for the descriptive title of the religious denomination, whose beginnings we are to trace, namely, the Congregationalists. These do not appear by name in the Bible, as the Baptists do in John the Baptist, or as Episcopal bodies do in the "bishops" of the New Testament, or as the Presbyterians do in the laying on of the hands of "presbytery." But they do appear in the New

Testament, if not by name, at least in their principles, in that when the first deacons were elected, we read that the choice was made by the "whole multitude" of disciples, the entire congregation thus having a voice in the matter.

Then as to the relations between the various churches, there was apparently no organic unity, but rather a community of sentiment, a fellowship of feeling, and of course a substantial agreement of views. Naturally, as the years went on, organization became more and more compacted, with a regular gradation of officers in each separate church, and with well-defined bodies for the meeting together of the different churches. This systemization continued, till, when Christianity upon the conversion of Constantine (312 A. D.) became the dominant religion in the Roman empire, the crystallization into forms had so far advanced that the church government was the stately episcopal. Power was more and more concentrated in the clergy, who ranked according to the importance of the cities where they officiated, Rome standing at the head. Thus was gradually formed the papal system, as complete in all its ramifications as any political organization.

It became tyrannical and corrupt in its sway, and that brought on the Reformation of

Luther and of others like-minded. This was an attempt to get back to gospel simplicity and purity. The effort was only partially successful. Church and State were so interlocked in those times, that ecclesiastical and political revolutions had to go hand in hand. Hence in Germany Luther and Frederick the Wise were inseparable, and reformation meant both religious and civil freedom from him whose throne was among the seven hills of Rome. That is to say, national churches were broken off from the huge hierarchy which ruled Europe. Henry VIII thus swung England away from the papacy, and the Anglican Church was the result, national in its scope and episcopal in its form.

It was argued that this was an improvement, from popery to episcopacy, but there were those in England who felt that the reformation had not gone far enough. They wanted the purifying process to proceed, and they talked so much about purity that they were called Puritans. Some of them came to believe that a little of the lay element should be introduced into church government. They wanted the church to be ruled, not simply by bishops but also by a session of elders. These were Presbyterians. Their aim, however, was to accomplish their purpose within the

Church. They hoped to convert the national organization from the episcopal to the presbyterial form, but it should still be the established Church.

The agitation went on, until some became so radical as to question whether the whole idea of nationalism in religion was not unscriptural, and once upon that line of thought they did not stop till they had very positive convictions. They were for a still further reformation; to have no national Church, but local churches, voluntary associations of believers here and throughout the realm. As they could not bring the Church of England to see as they did, they called upon all within its communion who shared their views to come out, according to the New Testament command, and be "separate," and they insisted so much upon separation that they were named Separatists, and sometimes Brownists, or Barrowists, from this or that prominent leader. They were really Congregationalists, and that is how they came into being. They thought the step from Popery to Episcopacy good, from Episcopacy to Presbyterianism better, but best of all would be a return to gospel democracy itself, with the "whole multitude" of disciples having a voice in the deliberative assembly of believers.

Accordingly those early Congregationalists were for "reformation," as one of them (Robert Browne) expressed it, "without tarrying," and they were not satisfied, as another of them (Henry Barrowe) said, to "give the people a little liberty to sweeten their mouths"; they wanted to give them their full rights. This was the cherished aim of the Pilgrim Fathers, who did not see their hopes as entirely realized as they could have wished, but who did look forward to a glorious future wherein their grand ideals should be wrought out. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Let us trace the steps by which, through great struggles, they advanced toward what they saw by faith. Their reformatory movement was feeble enough in its inception, for there was only now and then one who was radical and courageous enough to stand by his convictions. A few there were who came out and were "separate," and they were persecuted. They were branded as a "wicked set," holding "wicked opinions." They had to meet in private houses and "in the fields," and even then they were hunted down. They

were thrust into prison, where, they declare, they were rifled of their "papers and writings"; where, they assert, their quarters were "miserable and close"; where they were "grievously beaten with cudgels"; and where, according to their own testimony, there were "men and women, young and old, lying in cold, in hunger," till many of them died.

At every appeal of theirs for liberty, or for a trial, they were only worse treated. More and more repressive measures were adopted, until the aid of the secular government was called in to make a summary example of some who in their imprisonment dared to write and send forth what were called "seditious books," although the sedition was only frankly avowed Congregationalism. That, however, was enough to condemn, and two of the leaders, Barrowe and Greenwood, were hanged, though they certainly did not deserve such a fate. John Penry was also arrested for being "a seditious disturber of her majesty's peaceable government" (it was in the reign of Queen Elizabeth). His sedition consisted chiefly, to quote exactly, of "his schismatical separation from the society of the Church of England," and for this, one day about sunset, the hangman's noose was adjusted about his neck, and he was swung off into eternity. These

three martyrs dangled from the shameful gallows because they were Congregationalists.

It was because of such persecutions that a small company of Separatists, to the north of London, the scene of these hangings, resolved to seek refuge in a foreign land. Holland was the country decided upon, to whose city of Amsterdam many exiles from London and Gainsborough had already fled. The Scrooby colonists (who had been an offshoot from the little band at Gainsborough) made all their arrangements for the voyage across the sea to another shore, where they would have to learn a new language, and enter upon unaccustomed employments, for they were going from a pastoral to a manufacturing place. The adventure did seem desperate, but they were not dismayed. They engaged a vessel, and had embarked upon it, when it was boarded by soldiers who drove them off, stripped them of their possessions, and subjected them to other indignities.

In about six months the refugees made another attempt to escape, choosing an obscure point for their departure, and selecting a ship that flew the Dutch flag. Only part of them had gone aboard, when, at sight of a British force approaching, the captain took fright and

sailed away as fast as he could. The colonists were thus divided, and those who were bearing out to sea had nothing with them but the clothes they wore; and, what was worse, husbands and wives, and parents and children, were separated, and consternation and tears ruled the hour. Meanwhile those who were carried away were driven northward by a tempest, and the voyage, ordinarily of a few hours, was lengthened into one of fourteen days, half of the time sun, moon and stars being invisible; but God brought them at last to the "desired haven," whither those who had been left behind followed, one by one, and by groups and families. Great was the rejoicing of reunited households which had been separated in the fright occasioned by the appearance of British troops tracking the refugees. Who were these that had to flee from their country like criminals from justice? They were Congregationalists, who, believing in freedom of worship and in religious democracy, underwent for these all sorts of hardships. They did not receive the promises, but only "greeted them from afar."

They were now in very truth "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," and after a short stay at Amsterdam their pilgrimage was continued forty miles inland to Leyden, where

was located—the famous university, and where a fine tablet was erected to their memory in the summer of 1891 by representative American Christians who admire the spirit and who have inherited the faith of the Pilgrims. There the forefathers settled down to earning their living, though not, says Bradford, one of their number, without seeing "the grim and grisly face of poverty"; but they were, he adds, "armed with faith and patience." They had the satisfaction of being religious freemen, and they had "much sweet and delightful society and spiritual comfort together." John Robinson, who was to become so celebrated and of whom particularly the Leyden tablet is a memorial, was their beloved pastor. He was as much the religious progenitor of Congregationalists as John Calvin or John Knox is of Presbyterians and John Wesley of Methodists.

Still, they were strangers in a strange land. They did not feel settled, they still hoped for a change in the English policy, such that they could return to their native country. But as this became more and more improbable, and since their extinction by absorption where they were was only a matter of time, it was only natural that their eyes should turn toward some of England's colonial possessions in order

that their children might remain English and not become Dutch. America was the rising hope, and thither after long debate they determined to go, where they could lay, as it was expressed, a "good foundation" for the future. All could not go, at least at once, on account of the expense, but a goodly number sold off their possessions and bargained with an English company for the voyage, not, like the former, across the narrow British channel to a civilized people, but across the great Atlantic Ocean to a land of wild savages. It was a hazardous enterprise, but they entered upon it cheerfully.

Before the departure a day of prayer was appointed, and pastor Robinson preached from the text (Ezra 8 : 21, Geneva Version), and no passage could have been more appropriate, "I proclaimed a fast, that we might humble ourselves before our God, and seek of him a right way for us, and for our children, and for all our substance." It was a solemn meeting, and was followed by a gathering at the pastor's house, where many tearful words were exchanged.

The Pilgrims started, leaving behind "the goodly and pleasant city" of Leyden, where they had lived for twelve years. They cast loving farewell glances back, "but," said Brad-

ford, "they knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lifted up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits." They were accompanied by friends to Delfshaven, a mile and a half southwest of Rotterdam, where they were to take ship to England, and thence sail for America. The farewells were spoken on the Holland shore, except where emotions were too deep for expression, and then there were silent embraces with convulsive sobs. The salute for departure was fired, whereupon all kneeled and were led in prayer with tremulous voice by pastor Robinson, who commended them tenderly to the God ruling wind and wave. Then the vessel, the Speedwell, spread her sails, and, amid waving adieus which brought tears to the eyes of even observing strangers, the Pilgrims bore out to sea. They had not yet received the promises, but they "greeted them from afar"; they looked forward to better things. They doubtless remembered Robinson's parting and yet hopeful charge, which contained the well known words: "I am verily persuaded the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his Holy Word."

They reached Southampton, England, where they were to be joined by others. There were

vexatious delays, there were two starts, and two returns with landings here and there, because one of the ships, the Speedwell, proved leaky. At last, the Speedwell having been properly retired from service in Plymouth harbor, all but twenty of those who had been in the two boats were crowded into one, the Mayflower, of one hundred and eighty tons as against a twelve thousand tonnage and upward at present in our great ocean flyers, and with one hundred and two on board she sailed, September 16, 1620, for New England.

Little did those Pilgrims realize what mighty destinies were bound up in their humble lives. They were not the great of the earth. They were so poor that they had to submit to the hardest kind of a bargain with the English capitalists, who made the necessary pecuniary loans. It was a joint stock affair. A money share was ten pounds, not quite fifty dollars, and each adult passenger was put in as a share, while a person between ten and sixteen years of age counted for only half a share. Moreover, those Pilgrims were to contribute their services for seven years to the company. All the profits of the enterprise for that period were to go into the general fund, and in the end the Pilgrim who contracted his services for seven years' hard labor in an unbroken

wilderness was to get no more than the London capitalist who put in fifty dollars and enjoyed himself in the metropolis of the world. It was really a boat-load of bond slaves, who for conscience' sake were seeking a better country. It was the First Congregational Church of America, destined in the subsequent union of Puritans and Pilgrims to found Harvard and Yale, and to develop in general into a great nation, and more specifically into a religious denomination, which to-day numbers more than six hundred thousand communicants, besides a more than ordinarily influential supporting constituency. The Pilgrim Fathers did not live to see the full development, but they were expectant of a great future, which they sufficiently realized to make Bradford say in later years, "Out of small beginnings, great things have been produced; and as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone to many, yea, in some sort to our whole nation."

The long voyage is familiar to all, with the "fierce storms" cracking the main-beam, which only with difficulty was forced back to its place and spiked with a "great iron screw." Off Cape Cod, on November 21st, was the signing of the Mayflower compact, that *magna charta* of American liberty. There was a

month's prospecting, and then in bleak December of 1620, in the face of a driving storm of snow and sleet, there was the anchoring at Clark's Island where the holy Sabbath was passed, while on December 21st there came the final landing, which has been sung by many a poet, Mrs. Hemans, for instance, saying:

> "The breaking waves dashed high
> On a stern and rock-bound coast,
> And the woods against a stormy sky
> Their giant branches tossed;
> And the heavy night hung dark
> The hills and waters o'er,
> When a band of exiles moored their bark
> On the wild New England shore."

With what gladness did the Pilgrims, after the clearing of the sky, ascend that rising ground, where they not only saw the "very sweet brook" running "under the hillside," but where also, said Bradford, they had a commanding view "into the bay, and far into the sea." One can better enter into their joyful feelings after standing on the same rise of ground, and putting his foot upon a preserved fragment of the rock, and walking over the whole historic place. He can then see why they were so much pleased with the locality.

But there came that first terrible winter,

during which half of the hundred died from exposure and hardship, among the dead being the governor who was succeeded by Bradford. They did not even have enough to eat; on one occasion, says Baylie's memoir of the colony, being "reduced to a pint of corn, which, being equally divided, gave to each a portion of five kernels, which were parched and eaten." They had, as Longfellow says, "plenty of nothing but gospel." But they did not succumb to the adverse circumstances, for as the same poet has said,

"Giants in heart they were, who believed in God and the Bible."

The simple, contented lives which they lived in the wilds of New England, and yet the real heroism which they displayed amid dangers from howling wolf and the treacherous, savage Indian,—these have been celebrated in the charming story of Miles Standish. But we are apt to dwell upon only the bright side of the picture, recalling, for instance, John Alden,

"Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered the house, and Priscilla
Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a seat by the fireside."

We forget the darker picture which the brave

and yet sorrowful captain drew, when he said so pathetically:

"Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies buried Rose Standish;
Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the wayside!
She was the first to die of all who came in the Mayflower!
Green above her is growing the field of wheat we have sown there,
Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves of our people,
Lest they should count them and see how many already have perished."

Those were dark days indeed for the bereaved colonists, who buried half their number that first winter, but they persevered in the hope of a magnificent future, which they did not live to see, but which they "greeted from afar." That which they anticipated was theirs in part and is ours much more largely. More than six hundred thousand members of Congregational churches in the United States today, the most prominent colleges of the East, the great Baptist denomination with its democratic church polity, and seventy-five millions of people who are being molded by New England influence, look back with gratitude to the hole of the pit whence they have been digged, as Isaiah says, and to the rock whence they have been hewn. Plymouth Rock, with its sacred associations, will never be forgotten.

JOHN WESLEY THE FOUNDER OF METHODISM

"Thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost."—LUKE 1: 13–15.

XIX

JOHN WESLEY THE FOUNDER OF METHODISM

JOHN WESLEY, the founder of Methodism, died March 2, 1791. Exactly a century from that date a statue was erected to his memory in London, near where he died, and the eminent churchman and author, Archdeacon Farrar, made the chief address, while the news was cabled round the world. About eight feet high the statue stands, and represents him with one hand outstretched toward an imaginary audience and with the other holding a Bible.

He left seventy thousand followers in the United Kingdom, and nearly as many more in America and elsewhere, but now six million Methodists of the various branches, or probably twenty million adherents of Methodism, rejoice in his memory, and Christians of all faiths share in the joy, for a religious movement of such prodigious growth within a century and a half since its very first inception is deserving of the widest recognition and the heartiest congratulation. As Protestantism was both an advance in itself and also re-

acted beneficially upon Catholicism, so can it be said first of the Pilgrims and Puritans and then of the Wesleyans as regards the Anglican Church, whose membership now quite generally acknowledges and appreciates the benefits of both these offshoots from the parent branch. Born at Epworth, England, in 1703, and dying in London in 1791, John Wesley's life covers most of the eighteenth century.

What was the nature of this century in which Methodism was given its unique setting by its renowned founder? There was a very low state of religion and of morals. The Anglican Church was noted for "eminent respectability" rather than for warm spirituality. For the great glowing truths of grace, tepid ethical platitudes had been substituted in the pulpit. Christianity was on the defensive rather than the offensive. Dissenters also had become formal and frigid. Presbyterianism, to-day in this country the bulwark of orthodoxy, had become largely Unitarian. The other Nonconforming bodies had also drifted from evangelical moorings.

There were some earnest spirits, some true representatives of a warm gospel. The Independents or Congregationalists had their Doddridge who produced the much read "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and Watts

who wrote so many of the hymns yet in use. Baptists had their Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall. Even the Establishment had its Bishop Berkeley, and better still its Paley whose "Hours With Paul," showing the undesigned coincidences between the Acts of Luke and the Epistles of the Apostle, and whose "Evidences of Christianity" and "Natural Theology" have been classics in their line. Then, it must never be forgotten that the eighteenth century originated Sunday-schools through Robert Raikes, and foreign missions through William Carey; that it is luminous with the names of Pope and Addison and Goldsmith and Johnson and Gray and Cowper and Pitt and Burke and Wilberforce.

Nevertheless, the prevailing spirit was one of exceptional worldliness and wickedness. Among the higher classes there were rank infidelity and the greatest profligacy. We have only to mention, as types of the age, Hume with his attacks upon miracles and the whole idea of a supernatural religion, Gibbon with his polished shafts of cynicism directed against Christianity, and Bolingbroke with his brilliant skepticism. Fielding and Smollett as novelists pandered in their writings to vicious tastes and sensual instincts. Butler in his celebrated "Analogy," which continues to be studied in our

institutions of learning, said that it had "come to be taken for granted that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious." Dean Swift, himself anything but a model, said in 1709, "Hardly one in a hundred among our people of quality or gentry appears to act by any principle of religion; nor," he adds, "is the case much better with the vulgar." Indeed, among the lower classes profanity and intemperance and unchastity were fearfully prevalent, and sober writers believe that had not the Wesleyan movement arisen to check lawlessness and immorality among the masses, there would have occurred in England at the close of the eighteenth century what did happen in France with its Voltaire, a terrible revolution striking at the very foundations of society and government and religion.

There was shocking irreverence everywhere. A very characteristic incident, as illustrating the spirit of the times, is that related by Doddridge in a letter to Wesley. A lord quartered himself and his officers at a Scotch minister's house, and compelled the clergyman and the eldest son to wait upon them at the table, while with mock seriousness the irreligious lord himself said grace. This was the blessing that he asked: "God damn and con-

found all Presbyterian parsons, their wives and children and families henceforth and for evermore. Amen."

Now this was the age that John Wesley in the providence of God was called to reform. Fortunately, he had a gifted brother, Charles, to sing the truth which he proclaimed, and if the former was the organizing genius, the latter was the sweet psalmist of the Methodist Reformation. Charles once wrote to John what was most true: "We seem designed for each other." Charles also preached, but it is his hymns which make him immortal. John also composed songs of Zion, but his distinguishing excellence sprang from his sermonic and administrative ability. His mother's advice was therefore judicious: "Make poetry sometimes your diversion, though never your business." Rubens, the great painter, was at one time an ambassador in political life, but when a certain person said, "Rubens is an ambassador who amuses himself with painting," the truthful retort of a friend was, "No, Rubens is a painter who amuses himself with embassies." The artist did hold himself steadily to the supreme purpose of his life. So did John Wesley; though sometimes courting the sacred muse, it was to preaching and organizing that he gave himself preeminently.

Wesley's life is naturally divided into two periods, the ritualistic and the evangelistic. He did not immediately find his true place and mission in the eighteenth century, as we will see by a consideration of the first thirty-five years of his life, during which he did not succeed in breaking away from the environment of his age, from the trammels of ecclesiasticism.

His father was a scholarly and godly rector; his mother, Susanna, was a woman of remarkable endowments, intellectual and spiritual. Though she had nineteen children in all, she herself took their early mental training in hand. And she gave close attention to their religious needs. She taught them the Lord's Prayer at five years of age; she instructed them in the catechism and in the Bible. She talked with each personally on the things pertaining to the soul, and while she yet had only eight children we find her recording this method of procedure: "I take such a proportion of time as I can spare every night, to discourse with each child by itself, on something that relates to its principal concerns. On Monday I talk with Molly; on Tuesday with Hetty; Wednesday with Nancy; Thursday with Jacky; Friday with Patty; Saturday with Charles; and with Emily and Suky to-

gether on Sunday." That Thursday night's talk each week with Jacky doubtless helped materially in making John Wesley what he became. He was not a little indebted to so devoted and capable a woman, who actually trained her children to cry softly, who justified herself in telling a child the twentieth time to do a thing on the ground that her labor would have been lost, if she had "only told him nineteen times." How she ever found time for all she did is a mystery, and that, too, when her rule was to take an hour both morning and evening for her private devotions. Only by being very methodical could she have succeeded, and she therefore well deserves the honor of being called the first Methodist.

Her maternal heart was greatly drawn out to John by an event which nearly took him from her before he had reached his sixth birthday. One midnight the Epworth parsonage was discovered to be on fire. All managed to escape from the burning house except Jacky, who was heard to cry for help from the nursery. The father in agony saw the stairs all ablaze, and thought the child must perish in the flames. But the little fellow climbed out on the casement of the window. There was no time to run for a ladder, and

therefore among those who had gathered to help in extinguishing the conflagration, one mounted the shoulder of another, and thus lifted him down from his perilous position. He had barely been rescued when the whole roof fell in with a crash. Then all kneeled in prayer and thanked God for the deliverance, and the father said, gratefully, "He has given me all my eight children: let the house go; I am rich enough!" He was richer than he knew in the preservation of such a life, and the mother resolved "to be more particularly careful of the soul of the child," so providentially spared to the household, and, we can say, to the whole religious world.

That her nurture of him was not in vain is evidenced by the fact that he became a communicant in the church at the age of eight, and it was not an empty profession. Soon after this he had the smallpox, but he bore it, said his mother, "like a man, and indeed like a Christian, without any complaint." She adds: "He seemed angry at the smallpox when they were sore, as we guessed by his looking sourly at them, for he never said anything." He thus showed genuine Christian resignation beyond what was to be expected in one of his tender years.

After being put to school for a while in

London, he next entered Oxford, where he showed fine scholarship in the classics and other collegiate studies, and where he afterward became a Fellow and Greek lecturer. While here he and some companions turned their attention more earnestly than hitherto to religion. They read the "Imitation of Christ" by Thomas à Kempis, Law's "Serious Call," and Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying." John and Charles Wesley, and later the magnetic Whitefield, were the leaders in what became known as the Godly Club. They prayed a great deal, they scrupulously attended all the services of the church, they partook of the communion every Sunday. They almost regarded a hearty laugh and a good dinner as inconsistent with religion. They engaged much in solemn conversation. They visited the sick and the inmates of prisons and poorhouses. They gave not only their services but money to the cause. John Wesley once walked the distance between Epworth and Oxford, that he might give what the ride would have cost to the poor. He let his hair grow long, flowing down his shoulders, to save the expense of the cutting, that he might have more to give away. The charities of his entire life are said to have amounted to over one hundred thousand dollars, and even to have

approximated two hundred thousand. He and his "holy" brethren, as they were opprobriously called, made a most methodical use of their time and talents; they were so very methodical that they were nicknamed Methodists.

But Wesley was not yet the real Methodist that he became. He was still a high churchman, an extreme ritualist with mystical and ascetic tendencies. In this spirit he went on the mission to Georgia, soon after that American colony was formed and christened for King George II. During the voyage he was very abstemious in his diet, substituting vegetables for meat. He inured himself to various hardships. One night a high sea dampened his bed so that it could not be occupied with safety, and he lay down upon the floor, where he slept so soundly that he thought it would be almost wicked to desire or use anything better for a couch. After reaching the colony he went on a flat-bottomed boat to see his brother Charles at another colonial station, and, wrapped only in a cloak, he lay down to rest upon the deck. During the night in his sleep he rolled off into the ocean, where he was awakened by his sudden bath, but his enthusiasm in the renunciation of soft indulgences was not dampened in the least by the experience. He continued to discard the use of a bed.

While in Georgia he often slept upon the ground, sometimes when it was so cold that in the morning his hair would be frozen to the earth. Up to old age he frequently threw himself upon the grass for a short nap. When a soft bed was to be his place of repose, he had been known to throw himself across it, and to roll backward and forward till it was sufciently flattened and hardened to suit the stern tastes he had sedulously cultivated. During his colonial experience he would swim streams, and then let his clothes dry on his person. His rigid and ascetic life and teaching made him unpopular with the colonists, although one act of his along this line must have brought him popularity, and that was when he went into his mission school barefoot, to reprove some pupils for making sport of others who came without shoes and stockings. But his exceeding religiousness, coupled with some very churchly notions about guarding the Lord's Supper, resulted in the failure of his mission to America and in his return to England in 1738, after an absence of a little over two years.

He was now thirty-five years old, and he had not yet entered upon his distinctively evangelistic work. Had he died at this age, he would have been unknown in history, and Methodism

would not have had its splendid career. But here came a crisis in his life. On the voyage both to and from Georgia, Wesley had felt afraid in threatening storms, and he therefore doubted the genuineness of his religious experience. He sought for certainty of faith and hope, and in a Moravian meeting in London, while he was listening to the reading of Luther's preface to Paul's Roman Epistle on justification and a free salvation, he instantaneously came into a feeling so different from what he had had that he believed himself then and there for the first time to have been really converted. He may have been a Christian before that, but he did not think that he had been. At any rate, he was marvelously changed from that memorable night. He loved to tell the precise time of his conversion, exactly fifteen minutes before nine o'clock.

He went forth preaching instantaneous conversion and full assurance and the witness of the Spirit, points still emphasized by the Methodists who do not talk of coming perhaps unconsciously into the kingdom, after the manner of other Christians who believe more in the efficacy of religious nurture. Wesley could never have brought the calm but equally Christian Paley or others of like temperament into his experience of emotional and spiritual

upheaval, but he had a great work to do, as his followers yet have, upon persons of a certain disposition who are so constituted that to be religious at all is to be kindled to fervor and enthusiasm, and to have a marked transition from one type of life to another.

About this time Whitefield had been preaching outdoors to thousands of miners at Kingswood, near Bristol, the throngs fairly darkening the fields and literally crowding the treetops to catch the silvery and melting eloquence of that marvelous voice of thunder and of melody. Faces, black with the dust of the mines, were traced with white streaks by freely flowing tears, and a great work was beginning, when word was sent to Wesley for his assistance. He responded to the call, but at first was shocked at the field service, so entirely proper had it seemed to him for sinners to be converted only in the church. But he was persuaded to speak to the multitudes in the open air, and with such happy and thrilling results that henceforth he pursued that method of preaching. Declaring that the world was his parish, he went forth to save people in the highways and hedges. He prayed extemporaneously. He became a flame of fire. He called to immediate repentance. He proclaimed a full salvation. He insisted upon an entire

consecration which he termed Christian perfection, though by this he did not mean, he said, a state of absolute sinlessness. Holiness with him was freedom from voluntary but not from "involuntary transgression." He emphasized what is very much needed everywhere, the making of a conscious surrender of the whole will.

These burning truths were of course not acceptable to the stately and icy Establishment, whose pulpits were gradually closed against the great Methodist revivalist. Even at Epworth, his old home, the curate forbade him the use of the church, whereupon he announced a sunset service in the churchyard, and there from his father's tombstone he preached to such a congregation as never before had gathered in Epworth. His immense audience was so moved that some wept aloud, and others, after intense conviction of sin, shouted aloud with the joy of conversion. In 1876 a memorial tablet of John and Charles Wesley was placed in Westminster Abbey, with Dean Stanley to make the address. The heads of the two brothers are shown in profile, and John is also represented in that impressive scene of preaching from his father's grave to the assembled multitudes that seemed to comprise the entire population of Epworth. The

Epworth Leagues, the Christian Endeavor Societies of Methodism, constitute another memorial of Epworth's greatest son.

Wesley was both a doctrinal and practical preacher. He advocated Arminianism too strongly and antagonized Calvinism too sharply, and his opponents made a similar mistake on their side. A controversy was started which alienated Wesley and Whitefield, but this was only temporary, and, when the latter died in 1770, the former by request preached the funeral sermon of his friend who had been buried in Newburyport, Mass. And yet, though they became personally friendly, the breach they were prominent in making widened, till in that same year of 1770 occurred the formal separation between the Wesleyan or Arminian and the Calvinistic Methodists. Toplady, too, the author of "Rock of Ages," had a heated discussion with Wesley, but we at present of the same differing shades of belief throw over both parties the mantle of charity, while Arminian and Calvinist unite in singing both Toplady's "Rock of Ages" and Charles Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

Then, John Wesley was practical as well as doctrinal. When the miners of Bristol were converted, instead of having drunken midnight

orgies, they were persuaded by Wesley to have religious meetings at that solemn hour, and while at first these midnight meetings were at frequent intervals, they eventually were confined to watching the old year out and the new year in, and that is the way the Methodist watch-meeting originated. The drinkers when converted changed the character of their midnight gathering, that was all. Again, when the chapel at Bristol was built, the people were so poor that Wesley himself assumed the responsibility, and the property was vested in his name. This course was naturally pursued elsewhere, until he had the legal title to hundreds of chapels. In paying for the one at Bristol, a member suggested that the society be divided into classes of twelve with a leader for each to collect a penny a week from every one, and the great organizer thought this plan might be adopted for spiritual ends. Thus originated the class system, with a leader to inquire after the religious welfare of each committed to his care.

Lay preaching started as naturally. A layman was left in charge of the London society at the Old Foundry, and, the first thing he knew, in explaining the Bible he was found to be preaching. Wesley hurried back home to put a stop to the irregularity, but his wise

mother, who lived with him, said: "He is as surely called of God to preach as you are." He listened, and was convinced. Then he set laymen to preaching to other gathered congregations. He called them to a conference to discuss ways and means, and in a very practical way. In pointing out prevailing sins, for instance, one conference manifesto uses this language: "Who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling? particularly in selling horses?" He and his helpers evidently understood human nature.

The same directness appears in all of Wesley's methods. He meant business, and showed masterly generalship. He insisted upon fixed hours for prayer, saying most truly, "any time is no time." He required unhesitating action of his assistants, and to a plea of inability he gave this summary answer: "Gift or no gift, you are to do it; else you are not called to be a Methodist preacher." He advised the stopping short of a listless congregation in their heartless singing with the pointed questions, "Now! Do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt?" His annual conference was absolutely at his command. He yearly called his helpers together, he expressly told them, to be advised by them but not to be governed. He was thoroughly

autocratic, and the power that he was providentially led to wield enabled him to say commandingly, Go here! and, Go there! Exactly that he did, dividing the country into circuits, and manning them with his lay preachers, and thus establishing the itinerancy which has been one of the great features of Methodism.

Step by step he was building up a compact organization which in time must inevitably go alone. He insisted that his movement was not schismatic, and two years before his death he wrote, "I live and die a member of the Church of England." He would have no meetings at canonical hours of worship. And yet he was steadily forced into positions which made a separate organization only a matter of time. Two events in 1784 hastened the separation. America had become independent of England by a successful and now historic revolution. There were thousands of followers of Wesley beyond the sea, and since he could not persuade the ecclesiastical authorities to ordain a bishop for the western world, and since he probably saw the wisdom of an independent Church in the colonies which had become independent States, he resolved himself to ordain Doctor Coke as a superintendent or bishop for America.

He believed a presbyter (which he was) to

be synonymous in the New Testament with bishop, and, so far as apostolical succession was concerned, he pronounced it to be "a fable which no man ever did or can prove." He was more intent upon actual success than upon the figment of succession. He therefore, with co-presbyters, proceeded with the ordination for America, greatly to the displeasure of his more churchly brother Charles, who expressed his dissent in rhyme:

> "So easily are bishops made,
> By man's or woman's whim;
> Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
> But who laid hands on him?"

Notwithstanding this protest, that was the beginning of the great Methodist Episcopal Church of this country as a corporate body. The separation in England did not yet take place, but it was virtually consummated when in the same year of 1784 Wesley executed his Deed of Declaration, which conveyed at his death all his powers and properties to a conference of one hundred ministers, who two years after his decease took the next logical step and organized what had been only societies into churches. Thus Wesleyanism, as another dissenting body of believers, entered upon its resplendent history in Great Britain.

Marvelous has been the work of the founder of Methodism, and amid what difficulties he pursued his onward course! He unhappily married a widow who robbed him of his papers, and objected to his inviting his friends to his home; who, in short, proved a veritable vixen, and finally left him for good. Yet he toiled on, carrying his domestic sorrow locked up in his own bosom. He was often followed by a howling mob which stoned him, struck him, tore his clothing to tatters, burst the door from its hinges in the house where he took refuge, and shouted in brutal tones, "Knock his brains out! Down with him! Kill him at once!" But he never faltered in his great work.

He traveled, mostly on horseback, a quarter of a million of miles in all, and preached over forty thousand sermons. He did yet more. When he read this direction to his followers, "to wear no needless ornaments, such as rings, earrings, necklaces, lace, ruffles," we picture to ourselves the traditionally rude Methodist exhorter without culture. He did have some crude ideas, like his belief in witchcraft, which he said could not be given up "without giving up the Bible," and yet he was a man of great learning and versatility. He was a graduate of Oxford. He and his brother Charles for

sixty years carried on their conversations in Latin. He prepared grammars of Hebrew and Greek and Latin and French. He wrote more than a dozen original volumes, and he abridged and edited enough more to make a library for his preachers of over two hundred books, if they cared to buy all his publications.

But the time came when he was to rest from his labors. In his eighty-eighth year he came to his end. He thought a sickness in 1753 was to prove fatal, and wrote his own epitaph, but he was to live nearly forty years more, so unreliable, as physicians can testify, are premonitions which we ought to learn not to heed, for under their paralyzing power the sick person is not so readily restored as when hopefulness is maintained. Wesley's premonition, as is so often the case, proved false, but in due time the summons came, and he was ready. A lady once asked him, if he were to die at twelve o'clock the next night, how he would spend the intervening time. "Why," he replied, "just as I intend to spend it now. I should preach this evening at Gloucester, and again at five to-morrow morning. After that, I should ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I should then repair to friend Martin's house, who expects to entertain me, con-

verse and pray with the family as usual, retire to my room at ten o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, lie down to rest and wake up in glory."

That is about the way he did close his life; he was in the harness to the very last. He had no special disease, but there was simply a general breaking down from old age. As he grew weaker and weaker, he would repeat or sing a verse of a hymn written by his brother Charles who had preceded him over the river. He would exclaim, "The best of all is, God is with us," and when he had murmured, "Farewell," he gently sank to rest. The lines of Dryden, which he had been heard to quote, applied most beautifully to himself:

> "Of no distemper, of no blast he died,
> But fell like autumn fruit that mellowed long;
> Even wondered at, because he dropped no sooner.
> Fate seemed to wind him up for fourscore years;
> Yet feebly ran he on ten winters more:
> Till, like a clock worn out with eating time,
> The wheels of weary life at last stood still."

THE TRIUMPHANT NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Upon whom the ends of the ages are come."—1 Cor. 10 : 11.

XX

THE TRIUMPHANT NINETEENTH CENTURY

PROFESSOR ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE in his "The Wonderful Century," and others in kindred books, and, indeed, our very magazines and reviews, and our own memories as well, are bringing in array before us facts which make us realize that the accomplishments of the triumphant nineteenth century have been more brilliant than those of all its predecessors combined. More truly can it be said of us than of Paul's contemporaries, "upon whom the ends of the ages are come."

Other centuries have given us something, —the fourteenth the mariner's compass, the fifteenth the art of printing, the sixteenth the Copernican theory of the cosmos, the seventeenth the telescope and knowledge of the law of gravitation, the eighteenth the steam engine in its beginnings for practical use; but the nineteenth surpasses them all in what it has given to mankind. This will be evident from a rapid review of the immediate past. We must take a kaleidoscopic survey of the field, shifting the view very frequently, in order to

get any adequate conception of the marvelous changes which have only recently taken place.

First, the governmental readjustments have been marked. Passing by other nations, our own country has sprung to the forefront even within the latter half of the century, not only striking the shackles from more than four million bondmen on our own soil, but striking another blow for human liberty in the swift overthrow of Spain. Our national development has been along not only political but also literary lines. Substantially all of American literature has been produced within fifty years, until Sydney Smith's contemptuous, "Who reads an American book?" is proudly answered by rehearsing the names of poets and essayists and historians who do not suffer in comparison with those put forward by any other land.

What have been well termed the dying nations have been losing their supremacy, and the governments that stand for the higher civilization have been becoming increasingly dominant, until they now divide the whole world into their respective spheres of influence. Particularly has the Anglo-Saxon race, including the English and Americans, become the great controlling factor in shaping the destiny of the globe. Not without deep meaning is

the fact that within the century not only has a third of the earth's population come under the sway of those who speak the language of Shakespeare, but those who use this tongue itself have grown from twenty to one hundred and thirty millions. English in wideness of use has advanced from the fifth to the first place, and gives promise, Gladstone believed, of such prevalence a century hence, that those using it will probably outnumber those speaking all the other European languages. Surely, with such a hopeful trend of governmental affairs, for the last half-century especially, we can say, "upon whom the ends of the ages are come."

Secondly, the social or industrial conditions of the present are an immense improvement upon the past. Let any disposed to be depressed by the situation as it is to-day read Macaulay's famous third chapter on "The Condition of England in 1685," and it will be to him a tonic. He will learn that two centuries ago the laborer received ordinarily for wages four shillings a week and boarded himself. What would a workman at present think of a dollar a week? Meat was an occasional luxury then, while now, in America at least, it is a common article of diet. In France the people, instead of living as did their ancestors, so

late as a century ago, in caves and mud houses and windowless cabins, now have their neat homesteads often of seven and eight rooms, with a general air of thrift. In 1789 only one-fourth of the soil was owned by the French peasantry, whereas to-day more than one-half is.

Never did so many have the comforts of life as in the happy nineteenth century, and Macaulay in drawing his contrasts between the present and two hundred years ago summed up what he had to say in these words: "It is now the fashion to place the golden age of England in times when noblemen were destitute of comforts the want of which would be intolerable to a modern footman, when farmers and shopkeepers breakfasted on loaves the very sight of which would raise a riot in a modern workhouse, when men died faster in the purest country air than they now die in the most pestilential lanes of our towns."

Particularly in America, even in these recent times which are so bewailed, has there been social and industrial progress. The average yearly wages of American workmen rose from $247 in 1850 to $429 in 1890. President McKinley's Secretary of the Treasury, the Hon. Lyman J. Gage, on the authority of the commissioner of labor, said that from 1872 to 1891 prices of what workmen have to buy fell

twenty-seven and a half per cent., while during the same twenty years their wages increased ten per cent., a decided economic gain for the laborer. During the same double decade the depositors in savings banks increased from less than two to more than five million persons. There is room for improvement yet, but let us be grateful for the progress made, and let us be correspondingly hopeful for the future. Let us only push courageously on for the workman's Utopia, and through struggle, very likely, we nevertheless shall get there.

There is a Scottish story that two clans each claimed a certain fair island. It was finally agreed between them that the side which won in a boat-race thereto, which could by one of its rowers first touch with his hand the coveted shore, should be the owner. The McDonalds and the Campbells both bent to their oars, and the latter steadily gained on the former, until it seemed certain that the Campbell clan would win, when a McDonald laid his left hand down upon his rowing bench, cut it off with one blow, and threw it to the island just ahead of the Campbells. This was like Douglas carrying the heart of Bruce in a casket of gold to the Holy Land, and when his retainers faltered in some contest of those feudal times, throwing the precious treasure forward, and

thus challenging his followers to go where the heart of their beloved Bruce had first gone. If the present conflict between labor and capital is strenuous, there is nothing discouraging about the strife, for with this continued, with hand and heart engaged in pushing ever forward, there are to come steadily improving social conditions in the future as in the past, until the Utopia of our dreams, the isle of the blest, becomes the possession of humanity.

Note, thirdly, the strides that science has made. Geology, giving us a new conception of the eternity of Him who works from everlasting to everlasting, has been largely a product of the triumphant nineteenth century, and within its second half, particularly, we have learned much of the marvelous glacial age, during which our New England was buried beneath ice of Alpine thickness, Mount Washington itself being completely submerged. Then "Greenland's icy mountains" extended as far south as New York, Cincinnati and St. Louis, and as far west as the Mississippi valley. Moreover, because of flint weapons in glacial deposits, we have ascertained the antiquity of man, that he was coexistent with the mammoth and other now extinct animals twenty thousand or more years ago; and we do not feel obliged to accept the chronological

figures which Archbishop Usher inserted in our Bibles.

In astronomy there have been great advances. We talk boastfully about the discovery of America in 1492, but, to say nothing of lunar and astral revelations almost innumerable in our day, a great planet, many times larger than our earth, gigantic Neptune, is a comparatively recent gift of astronomical research to our knowledge, 1846 marking the date of this discovery that was not continental but planetary. There are still later astronomical triumphs. The black lines crossing the solar spectrum, crossing the prismatic colors constituting white light, were not discovered till 1802, and, what is more important, their meaning was not known till about 1860, when after experiments it was learned that the dark transverse bands stood, according to their width, for different elements, such as copper and zinc and iron, while the existence of these substances in our sun has thus been proved. We can, in like manner, declare with certainty what materials enter into the composition of stars infinitely removed from us in distance. When there are hydrogen lines, for instance, we know that the white sun thus certified to is much hotter than a red sun showing a different spectrum analysis. And by the

same wonderful spectroscope we calculate how far away starry orbs are, and we determine the rapidity of their movements.

What more shall we say of the scientific progress that has been made? "By the middle of the century," says President Low of Columbia, "Darwin had given what has been held to be substantial proof of the theory of development." Evolution in our generation has worked a complete revolution in human thought, as did the Copernican theory of the universe which in the sixteenth century displaced the Ptolemaic that for ages had reigned supreme. The evolutionary in its grand outlines, and not pushed to an extreme, is no longer doubted. We can no more speak of "science, falsely so called," for it is science, knowledge indeed, wondrous beyond all that with which previous ages have been favored. Learning more and more of the Creator and his laws, we can say with Kepler, "O Almighty God, we are thinking thy thoughts after thee," and with Paul, "Upon us the ends of the ages are come."

Fourthly, invention has been a most distinguishing thing about what has been well designated as "the wonderful century." Homer sang, as another has reminded us, of

"The smooth-haired horses, and the rapid car."

What did he have in mind? The lumbering chariot of antiquity, which to all intents and purposes survived till this century as a means of conveyance. Swifter than the Greek poet's "rapid car" drawn by fleet horses are our modern bicycles, and automobiles, and our electric cars, of which we can say in the language of the prophet Nahum, "The appearance of them is like torches, they run like the lightnings."

Not till 1846 did Elias Howe of Cambridge develop the sewing machine into a practical instrument which has since revolutionized the work of the seamstress and of all our shoe factories. The delicate and yet efficient mechanism of the typewriter is of our own day. Not before this century were there harvesters by steam power reaping the grain, and threshing and winnowing it, and delivering it in sacks ready for the market. Candles and snuffers are recollections of my own boyhood up in the Catskills, but these have been displaced by gas and electricity, which turn night into day. By the introduction of small incandescent lamps into the stomach for medical purposes the very interior of the human body is being illuminated.

For the slow sailship of all the preceding centuries, the nineteenth century has seen sub-

stituted the steamer, while the development here has been phenomenal. The first steamship to cross the Atlantic was the "Savannah" in 1819, but not till 1838 were regular trips begun with the "Great Western" leading off, and she required fourteen days for the voyage, which now takes less than a week, while the tonnage of 1,340 in the "Great Western" has been increased ten to twelve times, until "Great" is no misnomer when applied to our ocean flyers like the "Oceanic," as it was in being attached to the original "Western."

The first railroad was not opened till 1825, and that compared very poorly with the magnificent appointments of this later day, when we can travel in luxury at the rate of a mile a minute, and we may yet fly through the air. That is what we are doing in a sense, in that military experts ascend in a balloon and find out all about the locations of the enemy's forces. Competent judges inform us that the principle of aërial navigation has been mastered, and there is only needed the perfecting of mechanism to insure the practical and successful flight of human beings through the buoyant atmosphere like birds, and the classical fiction of Dædalus and Icarus will cease to be mythological.

The telegraph did not come until 1837, and

the first line was not in actual operation till 1839 in England, and till 1844 in America. The initial message flashed over the wire between Washington and Baltimore was the Scriptural exclamation, "What hath God wrought!" The submarine cable did not come till 1851; a cable did not cross the Atlantic till 1858; no really successful Atlantic line was laid till 1866, while now the same ocean is electrically crossed fourteen times, and other seas have likewise been invaded by the electric current. We can hear almost instantly of something that happened on the other side of this terrestrial ball, and because of the difference of time we hear of things, in a sense, before they occur. Then if telegraph communications are cut, besieged Ladysmith, closely invested on every side, yet sends by means of the sun and of mirrors heliograph messages to the general advancing for her relief, while now we are on the eve of wireless telegraphy. Truly, this is a great age in which we live.

The telephone is a recent (1876) and almost miraculous accomplishment of inventive genius, and we were amazed when, in 1893, the long distance between Chicago and Boston was covered, as a cornetist by the Atlantic played to an audience by the lake the inspiring strains of "America," while the Chicagoans, wishing to

be cordial, but innocent of the eastern situation, answered back, "How is skating on the Back Bay?" The phonograph, of startling capabilities, belongs to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. By it the human voice can be recorded and preserved, so that not only could Nansen in polar regions listen to the singing of his wife, who was in her distant Norwegian home, but the eloquent strains of great orators and the matchless melodies of prima donnas, and even the familiar tones of the beloved dead can be made to greet our ears.

Later still, within the last decade, came knowledge of the X-rays, which reveal the very bones of the human frame, and which enable the surgeon to locate with exactness the bullet, which can thus be removed with neatness and dispatch. Belonging to our day also is the discovery of anæsthetics, by which a patient can be kept in an unconscious and painless state for an hour or more, while the operator removes the eye or the stomach, and brushes them up and puts them back again, or while some vital organ is laid bare and manipulated. It may be a question whether we are indebted for this blessing to a Boston or a Hartford man. We may have to erect a monument and inscribe upon it, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "To *ether*." The discovery, at

any rate, belongs to this century, and in practical results to the last fifty years.

The photographic art was unknown till 1839, when Daguerre made his first sun pictures, to be called after him daguerreotypes. Not till 1850, however, did improvements sufficiently cheapen the invention to make photographs a possible and an actual possession of the poorest. And how photography has been lately developing, until we have our "animated pictures," wherein with the biograph we can see the very rush of railroad trains, and the movements and smiles of persons life-sized! On sensitive plates, too, are caught impressions of worlds in stellar depths hitherto undiscovered and undiscoverable. Since 1891 colors have been capable of being photographed, and when the expensiveness of the process has been lessened, we shall have in our pictures the very roses on the cheeks, and the delicate flush on the forehead, and the tender light of the eye.

To mention the crowning success of all along this line, there was at the Paris exposition for 1900, if press reports are to be credited, an invention called the telelectroscope, which enables one to see at a distance as distinctly as he can hear through the telephone over a continent. That means hereafter in-

finite delight to multitudes, who in addition to listening to beloved voices miles away will be able to look into familiar faces while the conversation is going on, though the communicating friends be as far apart as St. Louis and New York.

Such, in inventive results, has been the century of wonders, and if we have any regret at having lived in such a time, it can only be because spiritually we have not made the progress which has been ours materially, and we should gird ourselves for a greater religious advance.

Fifthly, there has been gratifying growth religiously during the nineteenth century. A short time prior to the American Revolution, Voltaire said, "Before the beginning of the nineteenth century Christianity will have disappeared from the earth." In this identical century the gospel has made greater gains than ever before. As another has said: "Whether by conversion, colonization, or conquest, the world is rapidly becoming Christian." While in 1800 the contributions for the Christianizing of the nations were only a quarter of a million of dollars, now they are over nineteen millions annually, according to the figures given at the Ecumenical Missionary Conference of 1900. And has this money

been expended in vain? One hundred years ago there were two hundred million professed disciples of the Lord, while at present there are more than five hundred millions. That is, the gain in this single century has been much greater than for the preceding eighteen centuries.

While in the United States in 1800 there was only one evangelical church-member to fifteen inhabitants, in 1890 the proportion was one to five, and must be about one to four at the close of the century. While in 1795 the first President Dwight of Yale could report "only four or five of the students" at that institution as church-members, and while it was no better in other colleges, now more than half of the great collegiate body in America is professedly Christian. When the intelligence of the country is being commanded, we need not fear for the other elements. Was there ever such a triumphant century even religiously? We can say with the poet:

> "The eternal step of Progress beats
> To that grand anthem, calm and slow,
> Which God repeats."

We recognize that "upon us the ends of the ages are come."

Finally, we can enter upon the twentieth

century with a note of victory, and with the assurance of still greater achievements under God along religious no less than along other lines. We shall meet with obstacles, but these can be surmounted by a conquering faith. When Alexander set out on his conquest of the world, he encountered at the very beginning the vigorous opposition of some Thracian mountaineers. As his Macedonian followers proceeded to ascend Mount Hæmus, they found that their enemies at the summit had collected wagons which at the right moment were to be let loose upon the advancing soldiers. Alexander, however, commanded his men to open ranks when the wagons came dashing down the slopes, and let the destructive vehicles go flying down to the foot of the mountain without doing any injury. But if they should be in a narrow defile, where they could not part ranks, they were to march close togther, and when the dreaded wagons were seen to be coming, they were to lock shields over their heads, and let the wagons pass over these on a bridge thus formed; and this they did, like the immortal Dewey, without losing a man. They had confidence in their shields.

The shields of faith in our advance as Christians can be made to serve the same purpose,

and beneath them, locked together, we as soldiers of the cross will be safe, and over them the war chariots of the enemy will go bounding harmlessly to the foot of every Hill of Difficulty which it may be our religious duty to ascend. We shall be invincible in every difficult pass, though there come thundering along all the engines of opposition that a malevolent foe can let loose for our defeat and destruction. Let us begin the ascent of the twentieth century for the conquest of the world to Christ with an assured confidence, with our shields of faith so closely joined as to make us like the Macedonian phalanx of old. Let us catch inspiration from the very times in which we live, for we are living at the culminating point of all the centuries, at "the ends of the ages," when we can say with Tennyson in Locksley Hall,

"Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

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